

GCC congratulates Bahrain, Qatar

RIYADH (AFP) — The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Monday congratulated member states Bahrain and Qatar for establishing diplomatic relations for the first time since their independence in 1971. "This decision reflects the deep ties between the two countries," GCC Secretary General Jamil Al Hujailan said, adding he hopes "the difficulties along the way will not affect the solid ties between the two countries." Bahrain and Qatar announced Sunday they would open embassies in each other's capitals during a meeting in Manama of their two foreign ministers. The Gulf neighbours have been at odds over which has sovereignty over the Hawar islands held by Bahrain, and the Zubara area on the Qatari coast. The matter is now before the International Court of Justice at the Hague. The other four GCC members — Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — have been working to improve ties between Bahrain and Qatar.

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Crown Prince visits army unit

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Monday called at the Fifth Royal Mechanised Division and conveyed His Majesty King Hussein's greetings to the soldiers and officers. He also commended soldiers' excellent training exercises. The Crown Prince also met with residents in the Jabar area and reviewed their living conditions.

Kabariti holds talks with ambassadors

AMMAN (Petra) — Abdul Karim Kabariti on Monday met separately at his office with the ambassadors of Tunisia, Qatar and Italy and discussed the latest developments in the Middle East and bilateral relations and issues of common concern. Mr. Kabariti held another meeting with Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi on the latest Middle East developments and Israel's settlement plans in Arab East Jerusalem as well as cooperation between the executive and legislative authorities. Also reviewed were economic legislation and draft laws currently being studied by the government and parliament.

Madadha resigns

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha on Monday resigned from the government, according to informed sources. The sources said Mr. Madadha submitted his written resignation to the prime minister's office.

Israelis not invited to Oman conference

MUSCAT (AP) — Israeli companies will not be participating in a three-day water conference and exhibition opening here on March 9, an Omani official said Monday. The official said requests from a number of Israeli firms to participate had been turned down. He said that the government of Oman was "not comfortable" with Israel's policies and that the private sector here was bound by the government's position.

Saudi dissident warns U.S., Israel

LONDON (AFP) — Saudi dissident Osama Ben Laden warned Monday of stepped up resistance against U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia and Israeli forces in the Israeli occupied territories. "After American foolishness, we are expecting an intensification of resistance against the American occupation of Saudi holy places and the Zionist occupation of the land of Palestine," he said in a statement released in London by the Office for Studies of Islamic Conflicts, which was founded in January and describes itself as "an independent mediation organisation."

Two Israeli-backed militiamen wounded

METULLA (AFP) — Two militiamen of the Israeli-financed South Lebanon Army (SLA) were wounded Monday by a roadside bomb planted by the guerrilla movement Hizbollah. SLA sources said. The bomb was planted near the town of Jezzin which lies just outside the self-styled "security zone" held by the SLA and Israeli army in southern Lebanon, the sources said. One of the two militiamen was seriously wounded and both were sent to hospital in Israel, they said. The Hizbollah movement claimed responsibility for the attack and said it killed some members of the SLA, which controls Jezzin without the Israeli army. SLA artillery retaliated by shelling suspected Hizbollah positions north of the security zone. Lebanese police said. No casualties were reported.

Clinton decries Israel's Jabal Abu Ghneim plan

U.S. president, Arafat hold talks on peace process at White House

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. President Bill Clinton on Monday denounced Israel's plans for a new settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, handing visiting Palestinian President Yasser Arafat a diplomatic victory in the escalating dispute.

"I would have preferred the decision not have been made because I don't think it builds confidence. I think it builds distrust," Mr. Clinton said as he welcomed Mr. Arafat at the White House.

Mr. Arafat was in Washington to enlist Mr. Clinton's support in persuading Israel to halt construction on a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

And as the two sat down for their Oval Office meeting, Mr. Arafat said he was confident that Mr. Clinton would "push to prevent this."

"Their target is to squeeze and to isolate Jerusalem," Mr. Arafat said of the Israelis, whose move he charged will "torpedo" the peace process. Mr. Arafat has also threatened unilaterally to declare a Palestinian state immediately.

Washington has called the planned "Har Homa" settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem "unhelpful" several times and stressed that both sides must take confidence building measures to build on the momentum of the agreement handing the West Bank city of Hebron to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

But Monday was the first

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli pullout from W. Bank will be very limited — Livnat

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli minister said Monday that upcoming army withdrawals from West Bank rural areas would probably concern only a "few hundredths" of the territory, far less than demanded by the Palestinians.

Communications Minister Limor Livnat told Israel Radio that the first of three further Israeli troop redeployments from the West Bank due to begin by Friday would also be carried out gradually to ensure that Palestinians honour reciprocal obligations under signed peace agreements.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Monday morning with top security leaders to discuss the scope of the first pullback that Israel is slated to carry out under the terms of a Jan. 15 peace agreement with the Palestinians that led to the extension of self-rule to the West Bank city of Hebron.

Under the Hebron deal, Israel is to hand over additional West Bank territory to Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in three phases to be completed by mid-1998.

"I imagine (Netanyahu) intends for a first withdrawal that is not more than a few hundredths of the area," said Mr. Livnat, a hardliner in Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing coalition government.

Mr. Livnat said Mr. Netanyahu had denied Israeli media reports he was considering withdrawing Israeli forces from as much as 10 per cent of the West Bank in the first step.

A government spokesman also warned the media against raising "unrealistic expectations" among the Palestinians with such reports.

The government decision on the timetable and scope of the first withdrawal is expected to come only on Thursday, a day before the troops were supposed to begin pulling out. Saeb Erekat, a chief Palestinian peace negotiator, said on Sunday that the Palestinians had not yet received word from the Israeli army on its plans to transfer security control in the areas.

Israel has already redeployed forces from most of the Gaza Strip and eight cities that comprise eight per cent of the territory in the West Bank.

According to Israel's interpretation of the Hebron agreement, the scope of the further troop redeployments to be carried out over the next 18 months is to be unilaterally determined by Israel.

Palestinians say the withdrawals should put up to 90 per cent of the West Bank in their hands, leaving only Jewish settlements, some roads and other specified military sites under Israeli control.

A permanent settlement for the territories is to be decided in final status talks due to begin this month on such issues as borders, Jewish settlements, Palestinian refugees, the extent of Palestinian sovereignty and the fate of

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinian protest strike against Israeli plan paralyses territories

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians shut down the territories and East Jerusalem in a general strike Monday in protest against Israeli plans to build a new Jewish settlement in the eastern sector of the Holy City.

In Arab East Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, stores, banks and offices were closed, classes in public schools were cancelled and streets were largely empty.

Residents of Gaza City abstained from driving their cars during the strike, which lasted until 2:00 p.m. In the northern city of Tulkarem, Palestinian police prevented people from using their cars, witnesses said.

The strike came just hours before Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was due to meet in Washington with U.S. President Bill Clinton for talks. Palestinian officials said would focus on Israeli plans to expand the Jewish presence in Arab East Jerusalem.

The Palestinian Legislative Council called the strike to protest an Israeli decision last week to go ahead with the construction of some 6,500 homes for Jews on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

"This is a message of our anger. It is only a first step and will be followed by stronger and stronger steps

using all possible means," said Ahmad Qouria, the council speaker, in a statement.

The Palestinian National Authority has warned the Jewish building project could spark bloodshed, but so far it has taken a cautious approach by preventing daily protests from turning into confrontations with the Israeli army.

Jabal Abu Ghneim, known to Israelis as Har Homa, has been the scene for daily protests since the project was approved.

But those protests were stopped for the day on Monday amid the strike and bad weather and no demonstrations were organised elsewhere in an apparent bid to avoid possible incidents with Israeli security forces.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu toured the Arab East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Abu Tour Monday morning to launch a new infrastructure development project there.

Mr. Netanyahu has sought to quiet opposition to Jabal Abu Ghneim project by announcing plans to also improve infrastructure in 10 Arab neighbourhoods throughout the Holy City and allow Palestinians to build some 3,000 homes in those areas over three years.

He told journalists that some \$7 million out of a

total \$40 million slated for the project had already been released to finance infrastructure building in Arab neighbourhoods.

A third of the \$40 million will go into upgrading roads, according to the Jerusalem municipality.

Palestinian officials have rejected the gesture, saying that they do not believe Mr. Netanyahu's promises and that Palestinians need some 30,000 new homes in East Jerusalem to make up for housing shortages there.

Danny Seideman, an activist in the Ir Shalem group that opposes Israeli construction in Arab East Jerusalem, said the government has never made good on its promises to the city's Palestinians.

"Every time the government finds itself embroiled in a controversial move to build Jewish homes in East Jerusalem, the so-called plans for Palestinian construction are taken out of mothball," Mr. Seidemann said. "When the storm dies down these plans are left to die a natural or unnatural death."

A former city official has said Israel has enforced construction quotas in Jerusalem to keep the Palestinian population in the city at no more than 28 per cent of the total — or what it was after the 1967

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein with one of the children at the Al Hussein Welfare Institute during a visit he paid there on Monday (photo by Yousef Allan)

King visits 14 orphaned children moved to Hussein Medical Centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Zein on Monday called at King Hussein Medical Centre

where he visited 14 orphaned and homeless children from the Al Hussein Welfare Institute undergoing treatment there and was reassured about their health conditions.

The King toured the ward and chatted and carried and hugged the children.

It was upon the King's directives that the children were moved from their society home to the hospital for treatment when he visited the institute last week accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

The institute, which is located at the Ashrafieh district of Amman, cares for 187 orphaned and homeless

Amman Chamber of Commerce lauds King and donates JD 25,000

The Amman Chamber of Commerce on Monday sent a message to the King praising his decision to dedicate Al Hashemiyeh Palace as a home for orphans and announced a JD 25,000 donation to care for the orphans in line with a call by the King for Jordanians to help orphans with whatever they can.

children who the King has ordered that they be moved from the present premises to al Hashemiyeh Palace which will serve as their home and said that he will move with his family to a modest home on the outskirts of Amman.

One of the 14 children is Nuha, a four-year-old orphan who is recovering after surgery that removed a stone from her bladder.

In his letter to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti,

King Hussein said that the children should be moved to al Hashemiyeh Palace once it has been refitted and as soon as possible. He said that he and Princess Zein will follow up on the affairs of these children.

The King and Princess Zein later called at the Al Hussein Welfare Institute to inspect the other children's conditions. He chatted with the children who are looked after by foster mothers and nurses.

Iraq awaits U.N. okay for 222 deals

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq has since December submitted 222 food and medical contracts for U.N. approval under the oil-for-food deal but only nine have been accepted, an Iraqi minister said Monday.

"The only ones that have been approved were three contracts to buy wheat from Australia and France, three to purchase milk from Tunisia and France, one to buy tea from Sri Lanka, one to buy rice from Thailand, and one contract to purchase medicine from

Britain," Commerce Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh said.

Mr. Saleh also accused the United States of genocide, saying Washington was delaying the arrival of food and medicine under the oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

"The United States is insisting on its policy of using an act of genocide against the Iraqi people," Mr. Saleh told a news conference in Baghdad.

Health Minister Umeed Madhat Mubarak, opening

a French pharmaceutical fair in Baghdad, said despite the alarming situation in Iraqi hospitals no medicine had yet reached Iraq from the partial oil exports that started in December.

"We are keen on having these drugs as soon as possible but there are so many problems created by the American delegation at the (U.N.) Sanctions Committee."

"The situation is deteriorating."

(Continued on page 7)

Kinkel arrives here today

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel begins a 24-hour visit to Jordan today for talks in continuation of the discussions His Majesty King Hussein held during a visit he paid to Germany last month, officials and diplomats said Monday.

While the latest developments in the Middle East peace process remain high on the agenda of Mr. Kinkel's talks here, the emphasis appears to have been given to economic cooperation between Jordan and Germany.

The foreign minister, who arrives this evening and will have talks with King Hussein over dinner, will be accompanied by a high-level business delegation which includes nearly 20 senior executives from giants such as Daimler Benz, Siemens, Thyssen, Rheinisch, ASEA, Brown Boveri and Krupp-Hoesch.

The delegation will hold talks with Jordanian businessmen and industrialists under the auspices of the Amman Chamber of Industry on potential joint ventures and licensing arrangements.

Mr. Kinkel, who will leave for Jericho Wednesday, will also hold talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

A meeting is also scheduled for early Wednesday with the special European Union (EU) envoy to the Middle East, Miguel Angel Moratinos, who would be arriving here also on Tuesday for a review of the Middle East peace process with the Jordanian leadership, diplomats said.

The German foreign minister will also hold a meeting with Jordanian recipients of German scholarships before talks with Mr. Kabariti at the prime minister's office.

(Continued on page 7)

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Home of Dar Al Bir is recruiting substitute mothers to care for the children at Dar Al Bir within the following qualifications:

- 25-45 years old
- Holder of a university degree or diploma or Tawjihi
- Has the heart and the will to work with orphaned children

BENEFITS:

- Good monthly salary
- Health insurance
- Annual and weekly leaves
- Social security
- Possible accommodation
- Transportation provided

SEND APPLICATIONS WITH:

- Detailed curriculum vitae
- Recent passport photograph
- One copy of family ID card (نسخة عائلية)
- Full address and telephone number

TO THE OFFICE OF:

HRH Princess Zein Bint Al-Hussein,
Royal Palace, Amman.

U.S. unlikely to pressure Israel — Syrian envoy

CAIRO (AFP) — Syria's top negotiator with Israel does not expect the United States to exert pressure on the Jewish state to revive the peace process, the Egyptian government daily Al Ahram reported on Monday.

Walid Al Moallem said a resumption of peace talks depends on a "political decision" from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to respect commitments for a Golan pull-out from the Labour government he defeated in May elections.

"I don't expect the United States to put pressure on Netanyahu even if his positions clash with U.S. vital interests," said Mr. Moallem, who is also Syria's ambassador to the United States.

"I believe that the U.S.

will only revitalise its role in the peace process when it feels a real desire from Mr. Netanyahu to move forward," he told Al Ahram.

Mr. Moallem said he held talks in Washington with the U.S. coordinator for the Middle East, Dennis Ross, to evaluate the outcome of Mr. Netanyahu's visit to the United States in February.

"The resumption of Syrian-Israeli negotiations ... needs a political decision from Mr. Netanyahu in which he confirms that peace is in Israel's vital interest," he said.

Mr. Moallem said the Israeli leader would have to "respect the commitments undertaken by the Rabin and Peres governments in order to resume talks from where they left off in February."

(Continued on page 7)

Egyptian deputy released on bail after questioning

CAIRO (AP) — A member of parliament who was stripped of his immunity last month for allegedly joining an illegal organisation has been released on bail after questioning, police officials said.

Ali Fath Al Bab of the Islamic-oriented Labour Party has not been charged with any crime. He could face up to three years in prison if convicted of being a member of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

Mr. Bab was released Sunday on 1,000 Egyptian pounds (\$295) bail, police said.

On Feb. 2, the national assembly lifted Mr. Bab's immunity from prosecution. Police wanted to question him about his alleged involvement with the Brotherhood and his possible connection to pamphlets that urged the overthrow of the government.

During the parliament meeting when the immunity was lifted, he stressed there was no evidence against him, adding that constitutional guarantees of freedom of opinion protect critics of the government.

On Dec. 26, police rounded up in Cairo and its suburbs several dozen members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the country's largest Islamic group, and accused them of possessing and distributing pamphlets urging the overthrow of Egypt's secular government.

Prosecutors alleged then that Mr. Bab was involved with the group, but could not question him because of his immunity.

Mr. Bab was elected in 1995 and was widely seen as supported by the Brotherhood.

Although outlawed, the Brotherhood was allowed to operate openly for years and some of its members served in parliament under the banner of other political parties.

But a wave of arrests started in 1995 after President Hosni Mubarak accused the group of funneling money and arms to extremists who use violence in their campaign to turn Egypt into an Islamic state.

The Brotherhood denies it backs the radicals and says it condemns violence and seeks an Islamic state through peaceful means.



HELP FOR IRANIAN QUAKE VICTIMS: Volunteers sort used clothes in the city of Golestan in Iran. The clothes were donated for the victims of the earthquake that struck the northwestern Iranian region of Ardabil on Friday (see story on page 12) (Reuters photo)

Petra major locale in film on German who discovered ancient city of Troy

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Historic sites, particularly in and around Petra, will figure prominently again in a major film on the life of a millionaire German entrepreneur, famous for his discovery of the ancient city of Troy in the 19th century.

The producers of the \$20 million film are also seeking a young girl to play the role of the Greek heroine in the 90-minute film.

The film is slated to depict the life of the late German Heinrich Schliemann, who followed leads in Homer's Iliad to locate the ancient city of Hissarlik — Troy — in 1873.

"Schliemann married a 15-year-old Greek girl, and spent his honeymoon in and around Petra," said Christopher G. Janus, who followed Schliemann's trail and helped locate the "gold of Troy" — 12,000 pieces of gold chains, pitchers, rings, tiaras, bracelets, swords, walking sticks and coins.

The "gold of Troy" now in the possession of Russia, whose soldiers kept the priceless treasure as "war booty," in a bunker not far from Hitler's own underground cellar following the fall of Berlin in 1945, said Mr. Janus, whose work is the basis of the film on Schliemann.

"There were two great adventures in the 19th century. Sir Richard Burton, who discovered the source of the Nile, and Schliemann, who used Homer's Iliad, which recounted the Trojan war, to find the ancient buried city of Troy," said Mr. Janus, who is of Greek ancestry.

Mr. Janus is currently in Jordan scouting for sites for the movie and expects filming to begin before the end of the year.



Christopher Janus

Jordan scouting for sites for the movie and expects filming to begin before the end of the year.

A good segment of the film is to be shot in the Kingdom before it is finished in a projected three months time. Ben Kingsley, who played "Gandhi," is tipped to take the lead role.

"It is also quite possible that the entire film could be shot in Jordan if the right locations are found," said Mr. Janus, who is accompanied on the trip to Jordan by close associate Valerie Valentine and a coordinator with the Chicago department of senior citizens.

Mr. Janus, who is in his eighties, has written several books and authored several publications. One of his books, "Miss 4th of July Goodbye," was made into a Disney movie in 1988. He has also made documentaries for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

Mr. Janus and Ms. Valentine, who met with Minister



Valerie Valentine

of Tourism Saleh Irsheidat this week, said they were very encouraged by the support that the Jordanian government was offering for the film project and confident that they would find everything they need in the Kingdom.

They are also certain that the tourism potential in Jordan, which has already provided impressive locales for "Lawrence of Arabia," "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" and an, as yet unreleased, film regarding a man and a desert leopard, will get a much-needed exposure through the Schliemann movie, again a Disney production.

"We were surprised to hear that only 100,000 Americans visited Jordan in 1996," said Mr. Janus. "It should be 300,000 and steadily growing if the right exposure is offered to Jordan's attractions."

Extensive use will be made of the ancient features of Petra and its surroundings in the film, which also draw on local

inhabitants for the bulk of the supporting cast.

"We are looking for an ideal girl to play Sophia, Schliemann's wife," said Mr. Janus.

"Sophia could be Jordanian, Greek or from any part of the world" as long as she fits the bill of a 15-year-old Greek girl from the 19th century, he said.

A "contest" is planned to select the girl after an open invitation is issued, he said.

Giving a hint of what the producers have in mind for the heroine, Mr. Janus cited a particular scene in the proposed film: Schliemann had written to the mayor of ancient Athens that he wanted to marry a "pure Greek" girl "who should be 15, a virgin and able to recite, without mistake, one whole page from Odyssey from memory."

The mayor found such a girl — Sophia — from a poor family and informed Schliemann who travelled to Greece with all pomp and show that befitted his immense wealth for a first-hand look at the potential bride.

He strode down from his golden carriage, entered the humble adobe of the would-be bride and demanded to see the girl.

Sophia was ushered into his presence, and Schliemann, after appraising her physical features, asked that she recite one page from Homer's work.

When she did so with utmost perfection, Schliemann was impressed. "I'm satisfied that you are suitable to be my wife," he declared, only to have the 15-year-old retort: "I may suit you, but how do I know you will suit me?"

Khartoum residents unbothered about fighting in east

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The impoverished residents of the Sudanese capital are more concerned with making ends meet than with the fighting between opposition forces and government troops along the country's eastern border.

Most, like Abdallah Al Hajj, a 73-year-old father of 11, also ignore repeated appeals by the official media for the people to join a holy war against the "invaders."

"It is not my war, it is the government's. My daily struggle is to provide for my family with revenues that are decreasing day by day," said Mr. Hajj, who runs a small silver shop in the old souk of Omdurman, Khartoum's twin city.

"I have 11 children, including six sons who work with me and our earnings are very thin now that tourists don't visit Sudan anymore," Mr. Hajj said. Holidaymakers stopped coming to his country after the 1989 Islamic-military coup led by General Omar Al Bashir.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) said the number of tourists who visited Sudan dropped from 16,000 in 1991 to 12,000 in 1994 while tourism receipts plunged from \$8 million in 1991 to \$3 million three years later.

Sudan's official press carry daily reports from the front as well as quotes attributed to local officials on the "atrocities carried out by the Tigreans (Ethiopians)."

The government in Khartoum accuses Ethiopia and neighbouring Eritrea of having helped opposition forces occupy villages in Blue Nile state, 550 kilometres south-east of the capital.

The National Democratic Alliance, which groups the northern opposition and southern rebels, launched an offensive against the region on Jan. 12 and has since secured control over 2,000 square kilometres.

"The government is trying to tarnish the image of the opposition, but we are perfectly aware that the war is between the government and the opposition and that there aren't any Ethiopian or Zionist plots," said lawyer Baker Yousef.

He said the lack of Sudanese enthusiasm for the conflict was nothing new.

"The opposition had once before captured this territory but were routed by the government troops some time later," Mr. Yousef said.

In 1987, the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army had seized control of the same territory but five years later was driven out.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Firecracker manufacturer killed in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — One person was killed and another was seriously injured in an explosion which occurred while they were making firecrackers in eastern Tehran for the "festival of fire," state television said Monday. The blast occurred as the two men were mixing explosive materials in a three-storey building in the Narmak area Saturday. They planned to sell the firecrackers for the festival, a traditional Zoroastrian event to be held here March 18, three days before the Iranian New Year. During the festival, people set off firecrackers and light fires over which they leap in order to be purified for the new year and to dispel evil spirits. The building where the explosion occurred was "80 per cent" destroyed and windows of buildings within a radius of 500 metres were shattered.

Top Egyptian cleric to visit Germany

CAIRO (AFP) — The head of Al Azhar, the top Sunni Muslim authority, will visit Germany next week to discuss the teaching of Islam in Europe, his spokesman said Monday. Sheikh Mohammad Seyyed Tantawi of Egypt will meet German Chancellor Helmut Kohl as well as Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, who invited him to make the eight-day visit. Omar Bastawissi said. The sheikh will "examine means of setting up branches (of Cairo's Al Azhar University) to teach Islamic theology in Germany as part of his efforts to spread the teaching of Islam in Europe."

Iranian writer dead in Berlin at 93

BERLIN (AFP) — Iranian writer and literary scholar Bozorg Alavi died on Feb. 16 at a Berlin hospital at the age of 93, his family disclosed on Sunday. Alavi, a left-wing opponent of the Iranian monarchy, had lived since 1953 in East Berlin where he used to teach Persian literature at Humboldt University.

French army chief holds talks with Saudi officials

DUBAI (R) — French armed forces chief General Jean-Philippe Douin met his Saudi Arabian counterpart Saleh Al Muhaya on Monday to discuss ways of boosting military cooperation, the French embassy in Riyadh said. Saudi Arabia's defence and aviation minister Prince Sultan is due to visit Paris on Wednesday for talks with French President Jacques Chirac. France, Britain and the United States are competing for a major contract to supply Saudi Arabia with main battle tanks that were tested in the kingdom this summer. Diplomats say France also hopes to turn a memorandum of understanding on radar and surveillance systems for zone and border defence into contracts. France, which buys one-quarter of its oil from Saudi Arabia, is the kingdom's third biggest arms supplier after the United States and Britain. Weapons sales average \$1.2 billion a year, roughly equivalent to civilian exports.

30 dogs impounded at Cairo airport

CAIRO (AP) — The quarantine office at Cairo International Airport on Monday impounded 30 dogs because their Egyptian owners did not have the proper papers for them. Under quarantine rules, the dogs will be destroyed if the owner does not produce the paperwork within five days. The dogs were brought to Egypt by Mohammed Hamdy Youssef from Hungary, quarantine officials said. He had health certificates with him, but they had not been certified by the Egyptian consulate in Budapest, they said. The officials also said Mr. Youssef lacked a license to import the dogs. They spoke on condition their names not be used. Mr. Youssef did not tell airport officials whether the animals were his pets or whether he planned to sell them. The dogs varied in breed and age.

Last "Satanists" in Egyptian detention released

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's state security court on Monday freed on bail the last four of the 80 "Satan worshippers" arrested in January, judicial sources said. The suspects had to pay 200 pounds (\$60) each in exchange for their freedom, but an investigation into "Satan worshipping" continues and the prosecution will decide later whether or not a trial is necessary, they said. In January police arrested 80 youths who "organised parties in the desert ... during which they wore clothing inlaid with skulls and upside-down crucifixes, and they chanted mysterious phrases." They were accused of having adopted "ideas contemptuous of religion" and "possessing and consuming drugs," charges with penalties of three years in prison, police said. Satan worship is against the law in Egypt. Egypt's mufti, Sheikh Nasr Farid Wassef, had branded the youths "apostates" and said they should repent or face the penalty under Islamic law, which could mean death.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Budgie-The Little Helicopter
14:30Flintstones
15:00French Programmes
16:00Super Sports Follies
16:30Dog House
17:00News Flash
17:10Album
18:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Murphy Brown
20:00Super Stars of Action
20:30Encounter
21:10The Nature of Things
22:00News in English
22:25Snowy River
23:00Mission Impossible

PRAYER TIMES

04:40Fajr
05:56(Sunrise) Duha
11:47Dhuhr
15:05Asr
15:38Maghreb
18:55Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
62366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.
Amman International Church
Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:
Cold weather conditions will prevail today and tomorrow with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. Rainfall is expected at intervals and winds becoming westerly to northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, showers are

expected, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.
Amman04/10
Aqaba11/21
Deserts03/13
Jordan Valley09/19
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 09, Aqaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 99 per cent, Aqaba 48 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Fayed Al Dabbas799155
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul898140
Dr. Mazen Al Nballi830435
Dr. Fakher Bibeisi552233
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Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qam281484
Al Qudus pharmacy
ZARQA:
Dr. Mazen Saffarini985832
Khalifeh pharmacy985417
EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Dept661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200
HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity644281/6
Ajah Amman Maternity642441/2
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marks891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Ansal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hilana Modern Hospital 00-55(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital021275555
Greek Catholic Hospital021272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital021247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15Sanaa (RJ)
07:25Damascus (RJ)
09:25Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:30Aqaba (add) (RJ)
10:05Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
15:55London (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
16:35Frankfurt (RJ)
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights

05:05London (KJ)
13:30Kiev (6U)
14:05Munich (YP)
16:30Rome (AZ)
18:15Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:10Beirut (ME)
20:30Cairo (MS)
21:40Tel Aviv (LY)
23:40Amsterdam (KL)
23:59Aden (IY)
00:55Bucharest (RO)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
17:45Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45Marks, Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:20Beirut (RJ)

08:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:05 Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:15Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:15Cairo (RJ)
12:30Frankfurt (RJ)
20:20Larnaca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
20:40Damascus (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights

07:30London (KJ)
07:35London (BA)
14:30Kiev (6U)
15:45Munich (YP)
17:40Rome (AZ)
19:15Dubai (EK)
21:30Cairo (MS)
22:50Tel Aviv (LY)
00:40 Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
01:00Aden (IY)
01:55Bucharest (RO)
07:45Beirut (ME)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:00Aqaba (RW)
17:15Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30Aqaba (RW)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple700/500
Banana600/600
Banana (imported)1000/800
Cabbage100/40
Carrot220/100
Cauliflower300/200
Cucumber (large)240/100
Cucumber (small)380/250
Eggplant240/120
Fava beans750/500
Garlic1150/800
Grape fruit180/100
Lemon390/200
Marrow (large)260/150
Marrow (small)460/280
Onion (green)240/120
Onion (dry)220/100
Orange650/450
Peas950/500
Pepper (hot)350/140
Pepper (sweet)390/220
Potato340/140
Radish100/40
Spinach340/150
String beans750/500
Tomato240/120

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Queen opens 14th conference of Arab Academy of Music

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday opened the 14th Conference of the Arab Academy of Music and the Second Arab Music Rostrom, organised by UNESCO's International Music Council and the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's National Music Conservatory (NMC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC).

The Queen also toured an exhibition which showcased a variety of music instruments, compact discs and publications available in Jordan, a Royal Court statement said.

The three-day conference, in which delegations from all member countries of the Arab League are participating, features a series of lectures and presentations, a seminar on "music forms and their style of performance in Arab countries" and music concerts.

The concerts include oud recitals by Jordanian oud soloists and performances by the Arab Music Ensemble of the Cairo Opera House with songs by Um Kalthoum, Laila Murad and others by the Jordanian

Radio and Television Ensemble and the National Music Conservatory at Al Hussein Sports City's Palace of Culture, the statement said.

Minister of Culture Dr. Ahmad Qudab stated that his ministry supports more than 180 cultural institutions, a large number of which are musical groups and associations. He added that the ministry plans to establish a national centre for Arabic musical studies, to be associated with regional and international music institutions.

Director of the National Music Conservatory, Mr. Kifah Fakhouri stressed the importance of focusing the conference's efforts on organising the "musical profession in the Arab World in order to expand job opportunities of music graduates beyond the fields of education and commercial performances" as well as "establishing an Arab music board that would set joint exams and competitions in the field of Arabic music."

According to President of the Arab Academy of Music Hussein Oreibi, the academy was established in

1971 in Baghdad, in association with the Arab League, and each of the league's member states is represented in the academy, the statement said.

The academy is the Arab World's sole representative in UNESCO's International Music Council and organises music festivals and competitions, issues music publications, researches traditional forms of music and has a growing library of audiovisual materials related to Arabic music.

The International Music Council (IMC) was founded in 1949 by UNESCO "to contribute to the development and strengthening of friendly working relations between all music cultures of the world." A network of regional secretariats in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab World promotes regional projects under the IMC aegis.

Attending the conference, according to the statement, were Minister of Education Dr. Munther Al Masri, Senator Leila Sharaf and Head of the Steering Committee for the National Music Conservatory Hind Nasser.

Candidate for mayoral seat shot dead in brawl

AMMAN (J.T.) — Authorities Monday announced the arrest of 35 people in connection with a brawl over municipal council elections, which left one person dead and dozens more injured, in the Mansourah area of Na'our, an official source said.

Abdul Razaq Salameh Biker, 56, one of the candidates running for the municipal elections, was shot and killed Friday at noon when approximately forty people from the same tribe began to fight over the municipal council elections, the source said.

"They were all praying in the mosque and after the

prayer ended, an argument broke out over pictures of local candidates running in the elections," the source said.

The argument escalated into an armed fight and police cordoned off the area and halted the altercation, the source maintained.

According to the source, the Na'our prosecutor has already transferred 28 people to the Jewish Rehabilitation Prison and is questioning others involved in the fight to determine who shot Mr. Biker.

Abdul Satar Salameh Biker won the mayoral seat in the Mansourah municipal council elections.

Defence team of former consul of Sri Lanka requests a full acquittal

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The defence team in the case of the former Honorary Consul from Sri Lanka to Jordan Tawfiq Abu Khajil, involved in an infant trafficking scam, asked the Amman Criminal Court to acquit him of all charges.

Formal charges pressed against Mr. Abu Khajil include: use and issuance of forged documents, issuance of false certificates, sale of babies (illegal under a 1929 law against slavery), possession of unlicensed firearms, theft, import of illegal wireless devices, abuse of trust and forgery of a government seal.

The defence team told the court that evidence presented against their client, such as seized documents and witness testimonies, was suspicious, unclear and not comprehensive.

"The prosecution has built its evidence on probabilities and suspicions, and one cannot indict and convict a person based on only these two factors," the defence said.

Further, the defence argued that the prosecution relied on partial witness statements and left out sections, an action, "which changed the meaning of these testimonies and altered the truth," it said.

In its 87-page closing argument, the defence team questioned whether the authorities had the right to search the office of Mr. Abu Khajil and seize official papers therein.

"The prosecution's actions in seizing official consul documents, concerning only the consul, violates the Vienna Declaration for Consular Affairs and the court should take this into consideration," the defence argued.

It also stated that blank family books and passports,

found in Mr. Abu Khajil's possession, were meant to be used as samples to win a bid and intended as forgeries.

"In its closing argument, the prosecution failed to mention that some of the seized blank passports were possessed of no serial numbers and bore only the number zero, which proves that our client had no intention of using them illicitly," the defence maintained.

Presiding Judge Issam Abu Ghneim and Judge Mohammad Ezeiz postponed the case for Mar. 24 to review the case.

Two other people are standing trial with Mr. Abu Khajil — Anourma Galondar Laji, a Sri Lankan accused of agreeing to sell her baby into adoption and a Lebanese citizen Andrea Bustani, Mr. Abu Khajil's secretary, who is being tried in absentia on charges of aiding and abetting the former honorary consul in trafficking the children.

Amman Prosecutor Ma'moun Muneizel had asked the court in his February closing argument for full conviction of all charges pressed against Mr. Abu Khajil, accusing the former honorary consul of misusing a trusted post, power, authority and diplomatic immunity in return for personal gain.

Mr. Abu Khajil was arrested by authorities on Mar. 13 of last year, shortly after police at Queen Alia International Airport stopped a Dutch couple from leaving the country with a five-month old boy whom they believed they had adopted after paying a sum of \$8,000.

The prosecution had charged that Mr. Abu Khajil has been buying and selling babies since 1991 and that he sold 36 babies for a total of \$250,000.

Iraq has not yet provided information about Jordanian detainee — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi Monday maintained that Iraqi authorities have not yet provided the Kingdom with either documents or files concerning investigations into the assassination of a Jordanian embassy driver, killed in Iraq last November.

"The Jordanian government insists that it be supplied with the results of investigations and is maintaining contacts with Baghdad in this matter," Mr. Dughmi said, in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

His remarks followed last week's announcement by Baghdad that both a Jordanian and a Saudi Arabian have been sentenced to death for the driver's murder.

Iraq named the two as Naser Rueili, 23, of Jordan and Zabun Zueili, 27, of Saudi Arabia.

Omar Ahmad Ali Sobh was killed on the road from Amman to Baghdad and assailants stole his car as well as the diplomatic pouch of the Embassy of Jordan in Baghdad.

In a televised confession in Iraq on Feb. 15, the two suspects said they and a third man, still at large, halted Mr.

Sobh as they wanted to steal his car but that the victim refused to yield to their demand.

They then apparently shot and killed Mr. Sobh, but did not mention anything about the bag which, according to Jordanian authorities, contained 250 blank Jordanian passports.

Mr. Sobh was taking the diplomatic bag to Baghdad when he was murdered.

In his statement to Petra, the minister affirmed that the Jordanian government remained in contact with various foreign countries where Jordanian detainees are being held to receive assurances about their condition and prospects for their release.

Jordan has continued contact with Israel, Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Cyprus all of which have currently detained Jordanian nationals, Mr. Dughmi said.

Referring to Jordanian detainees in Kuwait, the minister said that the Jordanian government is maintaining contact with Kuwaiti authorities to secure the release of all Jordanian prisoners.

Last week Kuwait released 10 of these prisoners.

House speakers meet with Sudanese envoys

AMMAN (Petra) — Upper and Lower House of Parliament Speakers Ahmad Lawzi and Saad Hayel Srour Monday reaffirmed Jordan's rejection of external interference in Sudanese affairs, aimed at destabilising that country's security.

The two speakers were meeting with Sudanese envoys Mohammad Salheen and Mustafa Sanad, who carried a message from Speaker of the Sudanese

Parliament Hassan Turabi. "Jordan is keen on safeguarding Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and remains committed to supporting all Arab states," Mr. Lawzi said.

Mr. Lawzi said that Jordan remains confident that Sudan will be able to protect its national interests and overcome current aggression on its national soil.

The two envoys later met

with Mr. Srour to review Arab affairs.

Mr. Srour was briefed by the two envoys regarding current developments on Sudan's borders with Ethiopia and Eritrea and he reiterated Jordan's backing of Sudanese efforts to deal with the crisis. He also voiced the Kingdom's support for Sudanese unity.

The Sudanese envoys expressed their appreciation of Jordan's backing.

Public figures to form lobby for recovery of Jordanians' properties in Israel

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amid fresh revelations regarding the existence of several hundred microfilms documenting Arab properties in Israel, a group of prominent Jordanian public figures has announced the formation of an association to lobby for the recovery of such properties by their legitimate owners.

The legal ownership of lands and buildings in areas, now within Israeli soil, by Jordanians would be documented in 1,340 microfilms kept at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The 16 and 35 millimetre microfilms reproduce original registers, dating back to the Ottoman empire and British mandate periods, a retired official said.

Owners' names and numbers of the blocs on which the properties were located as well as the size of the plots and the number of rooms in the houses are specified in the microfilms, the former director of the Department of Lands and Survey, Kamal Nasrawi, told the Jordan Times on Monday.

"The Jordanian government is in possession of the same data in full," Mr. Nasrawi added, "as it bought copies of the microfilms for \$30,000 from the U.N. in 1974."

According to Israeli law, Jordanians' properties in the Jewish state fall under the 1950 Absentee's Property Law.

In its acceptance of the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the state of Israel specifically rejected any amendment to the Absentee's Property Law and maintained that the status of Jordanians' properties "shall not change."

To "apply pressure on the Jordanian government to negotiate the restoration of Jordanians' right of disposal over their properties in Israel, with Israel" 30 influential Jordanians, from different professional backgrounds and public offices, have announced their intention of registering officially as a society.

"We invite any interested person who thinks he or she can contribute information, assistance or support to our cause to contact and join us."

Mohammad Atiyeh, the initiator of the project, told the Jordan Times, Monday.

According to Mr. Atiyeh, prominent lawyers, including Omar Nabulsi, Sharif Zubi, Anis Qassem, and former Minister of Interior Raja'i Dajani, well-known journalists, historians and intellectuals, including Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan Mustafa Humaneh, have expressed their intention of joining the association, still in its preparatory stage.

Due to their professional backgrounds, other figures involved in the project are particularly competent as to the issue of Jordanians' properties in Israel, such as former Director of the Department for Palestinian Affairs Marwan Dudin and Mr. Nasrawi himself, Mr. Atiyeh said.

As the very names of those who gave their support to the project suggest, the society "will tackle property rights of Jordanian citizens, regardless that their origins be from the East or West bank of the Jordan river," he declared.

While government officials insist that property rights of those "forced" to flee their homes at the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 pend on final status negotiations, the society would aim at drawing, at the official level and in the general public's perception, a well-defined separation between the issue of Jordanians' properties in Israel and the refugee plight.

According to Mr. Atiyeh, there exists "confusion" between the right of return or compensation, as upheld by U.N. Security Council Resolution 194, and Jordanians' right of disposal over their properties in Israel.

The separation of the issue of Jordanians' properties in Israel from that of the refugees lies on two grounds, Mr. Atiyeh explained.

"Firstly, many Jordanians owning properties in Israel are not refugees, but come from East Bank families. Secondly, there is no contradiction whatsoever between the settlement of the refugee issue, to be tackled in the multilateral track of the peace process, and the restoration of Jordanians' right of disposal over their

properties in Israel, which should be achieved by the Jordanian government in bilateral negotiations with Israel," said Mr. Atiyeh.

In 1994, after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, a senior U.N. official maintained that initial estimates placed the compensation due to Palestinian refugees in the range of \$17 billion. However, the official declined to specify the parameters and criteria used for the estimate.

Reiterating that the protection of refugee rights does not clash with or overlap the protection of Jordanians' property rights, Mr. Atiyeh expressed concern for the conservation of the old records and registers in Jordan, documenting Jordanians' properties in Israel.

According to Mr. Atiyeh, some documents were transferred from the Department of Lands and Survey to a storage area in Sweileh, inadequate to their preservation.

"We are going to hold the government responsible for any damage which may occur to any document useful in claiming Jordanians' properties in Israel," he warned.

Mr. Nasrawi, who has been in the Department of Lands and Survey for more than 30 years, told the Jordan Times that the department is in possession of around 850 registers, compiled during the British mandate regime before 1948 and based on previous records from the Ottoman period.

"Until 1962, the department used to issue transcripts of the original property certificates collected in the registers to anybody who would request them," Mr. Nasrawi recalled.

However in 1962, following allegations that some owners were using their property certificates to sell their land to Israelis, the department stopped this practice in conformity with an Arab League provision, he said.

A statement by current Director of the Department of Lands and Survey Ibrahim Musmar that the department would resume giving information on properties in Israel to the public was recently published in the Arabic daily Al Aswaq, but Mr. Musmar rejected this statement a few days after publication.

Japan donates Braille printer to school for the blind

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japan will donate a Braille printer and related equipment valued at \$95,709 to the Regional Centre for Rehabilitation and Training of Blind Girls (RGRTBG), according to a statement from the Japanese embassy Monday.

The grant contract to this effect was signed Monday by Hala Jawahari, director of the centre, Takayuki Kimura, Japan's ambassador in Amman, the statement said.

The RGRTBG, which is located in the Shmeisani district of Amman, and whose headquarters are located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, has conducted vocational training for blind women since its establishment in 1974.

The centre currently houses 38 women in its dormitory and provides technical training on Braille computers in order to expand their job opportunities.

However, the centre

found the cost of purchasing a Braille printer prohibitive.

According to the embassy, the new Braille printer and equipment it has provided should prove a significant help to the centre.

The statement said that Hiroshi Endo of Japan International Cooperation Agency is currently helping the computer training department at the RGRTBG as a volunteer.

Ministry to launch national vaccination campaign

AMMAN (J.T.) — On Saturday, March 8, the Ministry of Health will launch a nationwide polio vaccination campaign for children between one and five-years old, according to ministry officials Monday.

Vaccinations will be available at the ministry's health centres, maternal and child care centres, the health centres of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the Jordan University Hospital, the Royal Medical Services, as well as mobile health units that reach the remote regions of the country, the statement noted.

It said the vaccination will be administered in two doses: the first during a three-

day campaign starting Saturday, and the second during another three days starting April 12.

The campaign is part of a drive to eradicate polio from Jordan by the year 2000, a goal set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the statement said.

The Ministry of Health urged all families with children in the specified age range to follow up on whether or not their children have been vaccinated for polio.

The vaccine is being administered free of charge to ensure the widest possible coverage, the statement said.

Editor of weekly assigns temporary stand-in until court issues ruling

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Press and Publication Department (PPD) Director Mohammad Amin Monday announced that his department did request that Al Urdun weekly newspaper Editor Musa Kilani assign a temporary editor in his stead.

He called for the move to be made until a court ruling can be issued by the Higher Court of Justice in Dr. Kilani's case.

Dr. Kilani was suspended for four months from his post subsequent to a Jordan Press Association (JPA) disciplinary council decision Sunday to temporarily suspend him as editor from the weekly.

It based their decision on the publication of a news item in his newspaper which, the council said, unfairly tarnished the reputation of two association members.

"We have contacted Dr. Kilani and he informed us of his assignment of another editor to replace him

until the court rules in the case," Mr. Amin said.

According to the PPD director, Dr. Kilani stated that he appointed Al Urdun journalist Mohammad Sabri Sweidan to replace him until the court issues its decision.

The article which prompted the suspension, published in Al Urdun Jan. 6 issue, was entitled, "A reporter and a prostitute," and accused the sister of two journalists of running a brothel in Madaba.

"This news item was false, and lacked honesty and objectivity in reporting and tarnished the reputation of two of our members," Fakhri Abu Hamda, director of the JPA said.

He added that when Dr. Kilani was questioned by the disciplinary council about the news item, "he informed the council that the news item was, indeed, false."

The news item prompted journalists Yousef Gheishan, editor of the satiric weekly Abed Rabbo, and his brother Nabil, a reporter

at the Arabic Daily Al Aswaq, to file a complaint at the union.

Journalist Nabil Gheishan told the Jordan Times in a recent interview that he and his brother decided to file a complaint at the union for ethical, and not personal, motives.

He further charged that Dr. Kilani published the news item in question in response to his brother Yousef Gheishan's publishing a caricature in Abed Rabbo which described Dr. Kilani's brother Deputy Ibrahim Kilani as a hypocrite.

The JPA admonished its members in January that tough sanctions could be imposed upon journalists who do not abide by the Press and Publications Law.

The union also expressed its dismay over the performance of some weeklies which, it said, were abusing press freedoms and tarnishing the culture, values and traditions of society.

What's Going On

CONCERT

* Performance by the Egyptian Arab Musical Band, directed by Salah Ghabbashi, at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

* British film "The Missionary" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

SEMINAR

* "Music Patterns and Their Performing Styles in the Arab World" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 3:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Women in Business: Insight for Succeeding in the Marketplace" by U.S. Speaker Attorney Lauren Nile at the American Centre, Abdoun at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Paris-based Syrian artist Ziad Dalioul at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 3. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

* Display of musical equipment, sponsored by the National Music Conservatory, at the Royal Cultural Centre, until March 5.

* Sculptures by Zaki Sallam at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until March 15.

* Works by artists Chao Song-Yun, Li Chi-Mao, and Shen Cheen at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art, until March 4.

* Works by artist Amanda Shehadeh at the French Cultural Centre, until March 6.

Zaire rebels say Mobutu must go before ceasefire

GOMA, Zaire (AFP) — Zairean rebels poised to seize Kisangani, the last government stronghold in the east, Monday said that President Mobutu Sese Seko must quit power before they stopped fighting.

"We demand direct negotiations with Mobutu to organise his departure in order to leave the management of the country to men of integrity," a rebel spokesman, Gilles Ingala Gwamona, said Monday in Goma.

Mr. Mobutu is currently in Nice, southeastern France, following medical tests. One of his aides said he was not expected to return to his strife-torn country before next week.

Mr. Gwamona, a member of a rebel delegation which took part in initial peace talks in South Africa last month, said "any suspension of hostilities can only come" once Mr. Mobutu, in power since 1965, has stood down.

Those who want a ceasefire before talks have the sole aim of weakening the (rebel) alliance, which began its insurrection last October and has seized control of a vast swathe of eastern Zaire, he said.

At the weekend, rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila said his men were on the verge of taking Kisangani, having already overrun two more key towns — Lubutu and Kindu — and the last main camp for Rwandan Hutu refugees.

Rebel advances have led

thousands of refugees to flee. Mr. Kabila had warned of an assault against Tingi-Tingi where he charged that Rwandan former government troops and extremist Hutu militias were being armed by the Zairean army and intimidating and torturing refugees.

A rebel foreign affairs official, Bizima Karaha, ruled out the idea of a national unity government and said: "We are fighting for the liberation of our country, not to obtain jobs as some malicious people suggest."

He also appeared to exclude any partition of Zaire, but also said that retaining the territorial integrity of the country was "not a problem for the alliance unless the Kinshasa regime remains in power."

The latest rebel gains were "successes for a popular army which is fighting mercenaries", Mr. Karaha added, stating that "Mobutu is counting on two armies which carried out genocide in their own countries, Rwandan Hutus and Bosnian Serbs."

The government claims that the rebels are backed by Tutsi-led regimes in Rwanda and Burundi and by Uganda, which had been a home in exile for many of the Rwandan Tutsi rebel soldiers who seized power in Kigali after the 1994 genocide of more than half a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

All three neighbouring countries deny this.

The rebels' "justice minister," Kongolo Mwenze, Monday denounced what he called "manoeuvring on the question of Hutu refugees by some countries such as France and Belgium to put the Mobutu regime back in the saddle."

He appeared to be referring to renewed international calls for a foreign buffer force to go to Zaire to help refugees, which was last month mooted again by the Organisation of African Unity. France and senior U.N. officials.

"Everybody knew that Tingi-Tingi was a military camp as well as a refugee camp," Mr. Mwenze stressed.

The coordinator for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the rebel-held Eastern Kivu provinces, Filippo Grandi, said that evacuating some 160,000 refugees from the Tingi-Tingi region would be a "nightmare in view of logistical difficulties."

But in Nairobi, a spokeswoman for the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP), Brenda Barton, said that the camps at Tingi-Tingi "appeared empty" when aid workers flew over the region Sunday.

Ms. Barton earlier said that about 10,000 people, apparently Rwandan and Burundian Hutus, had been spotted moving through forest towards Punia, 135 kilometres south of the Lubutu and Tingi-Tingi region. Punia is already home to

4,000 refugees.

Truckers arriving in Kisangani, 250 kilometres north of the former camp, reported that thousands of refugees were on the road around Ubunda, 150 kilometres south of the threatened government stronghold.

Mr. Kabila Sunday indicated that thousands of refugees were moving back to Tingi-Tingi, called on the UNHCR to help them, and said that the rebels would set up safe corridors for them to go home to Rwanda.

The UNHCR spokesman in Nairobi, Peter Kessler, Monday gave a guarded welcome to this invitation. "It could be good news, if we had security and if we could have mobility," he said, "but we cannot work in the middle of a war."

The main exiled Hutu organisation, the Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda (RDR), Monday urged "humanitarian organisations still faithful to their mission" urgently to help some "half a million refugees" cast into the forest, without assistance and under rebel guns.

RDR spokesman Chris Nzabandora accused aid workers of a "shameful retreat" in pulling out of the camp and also in withdrawing from Kisangani last week because of the rebel threat.

European nations demand release of two Frenchmen held in Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — The European Union (EU) has demanded the release of two Frenchmen imprisoned by the Taliban in Kabul, a diplomat said Monday.

"We presented a message from the presidency of the European Union for the release of the two detained Frenchmen," declared Didier Leroy, French charge d'affaires for Afghanistan.

Mr. Leroy said he and a senior humanitarian aid representative of the EU passed the message to the Taliban acting Deputy Foreign Minister Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai Sunday.

Mr. Stanekzai replied that he "would pass on the message to higher Taliban authorities," reported Mr. Leroy.

Dr. C.F.W. Rietveld, the chief representative of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) for Afghanistan, funds the relief agency the two imprisoned Frenchmen work for.

Dr. Rietveld, who visited Stanekzai with Mr. Leroy, said echo had earmarked \$42.25 million for humanitarian relief in Afghanistan for 1997, a 400 per cent increase over the last year.

"We are the largest emergency aid donor — not only for Afghanistan — but also in the entire world," Dr. Rietveld noted.

The two arrested Frenchmen, Frederic Michel and Jose Daniel Llorente work for the relief agency Action

Contre La Faim (ACF), which echo has funded with \$520,000 in 1997 for the supplementary feeding of the hosts of malnourished Afghan children in Kabul.

Mr. Michel and Mr. Llorente were arrested 10 days ago when the Taliban raided their residence where a farewell lunch for departing expatriate female staff was also attended by 60 Afghan women employees of ACF.

The two ACF Frenchmen have been imprisoned in the downtown Sedarat prison while they are being investigated for at least six alleged violations against Shariah or Islamic Law, including cavorting with "half-naked" Afghan women.

The ultra-conservative Taliban have enforced a strict interpretation of Shariah in Kabul, which they seized Sept. 27, 1996 from the government of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

However, the Taliban have allowed the French diplomat in Kabul, Western aid workers and journalists including AFP to visit these two prisoners.

Prison conditions for the two Frenchmen are the same as living conditions for the average Taliban garrisoned in the Afghan capital.

Their second-storey "cell" is a former prison office, and although the window is barred the ordinary wooden door is not always kept locked and they are free to use the toilet in the corridor.

For heating there is a wood-fired stove in the room and Mr. Michel and Mr. Llorente have been given more than adequate blankets for bedding.

At night — when Kabul has electricity — a single bulb in the ceiling gives them illumination enough to read the large stack of books Mr. Leroy has delivered.

They have no radio for company but they share their cell with a non-Afghan youth also imprisoned by the Taliban.

The prison governor, a sympathetic and educated Pashtun, accompanies all visitors from the Kabul expatriate community, but visits are made without any bureaucratic impediment such as passes or appointments.

AFP also spoke Sunday with the five Afghan male ACF employees — a cook, two drivers and two watchmen — who although kept in different cells, are locked up in the same prison block as the Frenchmen.

These five men were brought out into the sunny prison yard to meet AFP, where the conversation — as with the Frenchmen — was free except for any discussion concerning their case under investigation.

They looked in good condition and said they had visits from their families last Friday, and were able to receive food and other necessities from the outside.

Hesse vote gives Kohl much-needed boost

FRANKFURT (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU), struggling in national voter surveys against a backdrop of record unemployment, received a badly-needed boost in local elections Sunday.

Its vote in the state of Hesse rose one percentage point to 33.0 per cent and it gained 2.9 points to 36.3 per cent in the country's financial capital of Frankfurt, long a bastion of the left-wing Social Democrats, preliminary official results showed.

CDU officials quickly seized on the results, saying they endorsed Mr. Kohl's drive for tax and pension reforms, now the subject of heated wrangling both within his coalition and with the opposition Social Democrats (SDP).

"The victory in Frankfurt and the good results statewide in Hesse show that the CDU has passed the voters' test," said CDU General Secretary Peter Hintze. "These elections represent an endorsement for the reform policies of Chancellor Helmut Kohl."

The Hesse election came at a difficult time for Mr. Kohl's government which has been criticised for presiding over the worst unemployment since the 1930s.

A newspaper Sunday said February jobless data due Thursday would show that 4.8 million people were out of work, a new postwar record.

The vote in Hesse, one of Germany's wealthiest states with 4.5 million eligible voters, was dominated by local issues but carried national implications as one of only two elections this year, Hamburg votes in September.

The SPD, the main opposition party in Bonn, also posted modest gains in Hesse, gaining 1.6 points to 38.0 per cent compared with the last local election in 1993.

"This shows we are moving forward," said Hesse Premier Hans Eichel of the SPD. His party has bounced back in voter surveys after a steep plunge in 1995.



A Pakistani worker cleans up scattered papers in front of a crater (foreground) after a bomb ripped through a newspaper office in the southern port city of Karachi Monday. An official of the bomb disposal squad said the 400-gramme device exploded outside the reception area of the Pakistani independent Urdu-language evening newspaper Quami Akbar. No casualties were reported (Reuters photo)

Bomb rips through newspaper office; 8 killed in separate Karachi shootings

KARACHI (AFP) — A time-bomb ripped through a Karachi newspaper office early Monday, following eight killings in shooting incidents, in a new wave of violence in Pakistan's largest city, police said.

The explosion caused damage but only minor casualties, police said.

The bomb, apparently wrapped in a packet, was placed in the administration section of the Urdu language Quami Akbar Daily located on the first floor of a four storey building in Pakistan's biggest city.

The explosion shattered windows, badly damaged computers, furniture and other equipment at the office, the paper's chief executive Mukhtar Aaqil said.

There were no staff in the

building at the time, police said. But flying glass slightly hurt a guard and a camera operator, witnesses said.

The blast also left a big hole in the floor and damaged an outer wall, police described the blast an act of terrorism.

"We have set up teams to investigate the incident and arrest the terrorists," city police chief, Manzoor Mughal, said.

Mr. Aaqil, who is also chief editor, said his newspaper was known for publishing stories exposing people involved in crime and corruption. "However we received no threats from any party," he added.

"It is a severe blow to the freedom of press in the country," president of Karachi Union of Journalists (KUJ) Sarfraz Ahmad said, demanding that the culprits be given exemplary punishment.

The blast followed a spate of killings in which hit-and-run gunmen killed eight people Saturday and Sunday in different parts of the city, police said.

They included three Shi'ite political activists whose party said they were shot dead for sectarian motives.

It was not known why and by whom the five other people, among them a police constable, were targeted.

The Shi'ite party, Tehreek-i-Jafaria Pakistan (TJP), blamed the killings of its three members on the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a rival group from the majority Sunni Muslim community. The SSP denied the charge.

Chechen warlord threatens terrorist campaign in Russia

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Chechen warlord Salman Raduyev vowed Monday to carry out a series of terrorist acts in Russia April 21, to mark the anniversary of the death of Chechnya's independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Commander Raduyev issued his threat after reviewing 500 of his guerrillas, who paraded in the central square of the Chechen capital Grozny, an AFP correspondent reported.

"On April 21 I will carry out a number of terrorist acts in Russia, and that will cause great sorrow there," Commander Raduyev told a 3,000-strong meeting.

Dudayev, who proclaimed Chechnya independent in 1991, was killed April 21, 1996, in what the Chechen separatists said was a targeted Russian missile attack.

Since the attack, Dudayev's body and grave have not been seen, and Commander Raduyev has repeatedly insisted that he survived, despite severe injuries.

After the separatists recaptured Grozny last August a peace deal was signed and Russian troops withdrew from the devastated north Caucasus republic.

Chechen military Commander Aslan Maskhadov was elected president in January.

Commander Raduyev's uncompromising hostility toward Russia contrasts with Mr. Maskhadov's more flexible position toward Moscow, which spent 21 months trying to crush the separatists in a brutal war.

Several senior Chechen separatist officials, including former President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and former field Commander Ruslan Gelayev, addressed the rally after Commander Raduyev, in an apparent show of support for the warlord.

Movladi Udugov, Mr. Maskhadov's chief negotiator with Russia, described the rally as "a challenge to the current authorities."

Runaway train crashes in Pakistan killing 119

MULTAN, Pakistan (R) — At least 119 people were killed in Pakistan Monday when a runaway train crashed after being switched to a dead-end line to avert a head-on collision with another passenger express.

Hospital officials in Khanewal town in central Punjab province said 70 men, 27 women and 22 children were killed.

They said 25 seriously injured passengers had been moved to the nearby city of Multan. Thirty-one people were being treated in Khanewal's Civil Hospital and 25 had been discharged.

Railway officials said the Zulfiqar express left Khanewal for Karachi but failed to halt at a junction, apparently because of brake failure, at about 4 a.m. (2300 GMT Sunday).

Controllers switched it to a dead-end line to stop it from smashing into the Karachi-Lahore express train on the single-track line and causing even greater carnage.

The diverted train then hit the buffers at the end of the spur line near the village of Mirshah, about five kilometres from Khanewal, derailed the engine and five coaches.

The engine ploughed through the buffers into a sand barrier. Two of the coaches were completely crushed, witnesses said.

"Some of the bodies are unrecognisable," Khanewal town police superintendent Mushatq Warraich told Reuters.

Newly elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif flew to Khanewal by helicopter in the afternoon to inspect the scene of the crash. Pakistan's worst rail accident for seven years.

Mr. Warraich said rescuers had first tried to use blow-torches to free victims from the wreckage, but were unable to do so because the carriages were made of highly inflammable material.

One survivor, Mohammad Ashiq, was distraught, wailing and hitting his head with both hands. Seven members of his family died in the crash. They had been on their way to a wedding.

Women from nearby villages gathered at the scene, wailing and beating their chests in mourning.

Khanewal residents thronged the hospital to donate blood after appeals broadcast over mosque loudspeakers. Private cars helped ambulances to ferry casualties to the hospital, about 12 kilometres from the scene of the accident.

On Jan. 21, an express train hit a school van at a level crossing at Gujar Khan, 60 kilometres south of Islamabad, killing nine people, including six children and two teachers.

On Jan. 3, 1990, a passenger train ploughed into a stationary freight train at Sangi Railway Station in Sindh province, killing 307 people and injuring 400.

On Saturday, Mr. Sharif toured earthquake-stricken parts of the southwestern province of Baluchistan, where about 60 people died Friday, to offer the victims sympathy and compensation.

Indonesia's Megawati cheered as police quiz her for three hours

JAKARTA (AFP) — Thousands of supporters cheered Indonesian opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri as she underwent more than three hours of fresh police questioning Monday.

A growing crowd that reached some 3,000 people by noon thronged to the south Jakarta police station in a show of support for Ms. Megawati who answered a second police summons.

She was being questioned over allegations that she held an illegal meeting at her home in east Jakarta Jan. 10.

Shouts of "long live Megawati" and applause erupted as Ms. Megawati arrived and then later left the south

Jakarta police station.

Some 100 helmeted riot police in full gear, with gas canisters and electric prods on their haunch, wielding shields and sticks, attempted to vainly contain the crowd but there were no incident, witnesses said.

One of the team of dozens of lawyers that accompanied Ms. Megawati, Petrus Balapatyona, said that a total of 18 questions were asked by the police about who organized the meeting and what its concepts were.

"I think we can say that by today, this (questioning) can be deemed completed," Mr. Balapatyona said, adding that the police made no mention of another further questioning in the near future.

Ms. Megawati, who had difficulty entering the police compound at her arrival and to leave it because the enthusiasm of the crowd, made no comment.

She was ousted as leader of the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) in June 1996 by a government-backed party faction, who then installed Suryadi as the new leader.

Ms. Megawati's supporters held a meeting at her east Jakarta home Jan. 10 to celebrate the PDI's 24th anniversary. But authorities maintain that it was a political meeting and have accused the organisers of not seeking a police permit.

EU ministers agree climate-change cuts target

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union (EU) environment ministers agreed to cut the bloc's emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide by 15 per cent of 1990 levels by 2010, Dutch Minister Margreet De Boer told reporters late Sunday.

"We have an agreement on the reduction of 15 per cent for Europe as a whole," Ms. De Boer said in reference to the EU's 15 countries after chairing a meeting of her EU counterparts.

The gases trap heat close to the Earth's surface and are blamed for what scientists fear will be a long-term warming of the global climate.

The deal emerged after an informal session of talks Sunday aimed at striking a collective deal on emissions, which diplomats had played down as unlikely to produce results.

Ministers agreed on how to share out individual cuts between countries for only 10 percentage points of the 15 per cent pledged, an indication of the difficulties the EU still faces with its announced target.

Ms. De Boer described the 15 per cent figure as a firm commitment for the EU to take to international climate change talks scheduled for Kyoto, Japan in December.

"We go to Kyoto with 15 per cent and if that's agreed then we will negotiate about how to share out the remaining five per cent within the EU," she said.

Plans ahead of the meeting targeted the major greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (CO2) from burning fossil fuels like coal and oil, to make up 12 percentage points of the EU's proposed

15 per cent cut.

The Dutch, as holders of the EU presidency, unusually scheduled the meeting on a Sunday in anticipation of two-day, formal ministerial talks Monday and international talks by climate negotiators starting Monday in Bonn.

In reaching a deal, ministers rejigged a previous Dutch proposal, softening the demands on most countries in striking agreement on the overall figure. Dutch diplomats said.

Germans see Hitler, Einstein clones on newsstands

BONN (R) — Scientific breakthroughs on cloning stirred haunted memories in Germany of its Nazi past Monday when a leading magazine printed a line of Adolf Hitler's marching on its cover next to Albert Einsteins and Claudia Schiffer.

Der Spiegel news magazine published a drawing showing five identical copies of the Nazi leader in his brown uniform marching next to four Einsteins, clad in baggy trousers, and three Schiffers, wearing tight-fitting mini skirts.

Standing next to the clones of Hitler, who dreamed more than half a century ago of breeding a master race, is the sheep Dolly that Scottish scientists cloned.

News of successful cloning of sheep in by Scottish scientists, and of monkeys in Oregon have caused a worldwide uproar, prompting some governments to promise thorough checks on scientists and bans on carbon-copy humans.

Experts said the cloning success in Oregon, which has not yet been announced or published in a scientific journal, adds to a growing body of evidence that there are no insurmountable biological barriers to creating human clones.

Lead researcher Don Wolf, a senior scientist at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Centre in Beaverton, and director of the Human In Vitro Fertilisation Laboratory at Oregon Health Services University in Portland, told the paper researchers do not plan to produce clones from adult monkeys.

"This is really an effort to see if we can create genetically identical monkeys for research," he told the paper.

Far fewer of these carbon-copy animals would be needed for drug experiments because their sameness would eliminate much of the genetic variability that confounds such experiments, he said.

"Science on the way to cloning humans" reads the Der Spiegel cover story heading, which leads a 10-page story on the subject.

"Science has entered into a frontier area that raises a host of fundamental ethical questions," the magazine wrote in its letter from the publisher.

Germans have reacted with a mixture of horror and humour to the news that scientists have cloned sheep. Government ministers have assured an alarmed public humans would never be cloned and pointed out the country has stiff laws against any such attempts.

The Nazis tried to breed a "superhuman race" and performed horrific experiments on humans. Nazi scientists took part in an infamous attempt to create an Aryan blue-eyed and blond-haired "master race."

The Nazis also adopted the "science" of eugenics, which proclaimed that some were fit to live and breed while others, such as the mentally or physically handicapped, were considered genetically inferior and had to be destroyed or sterilised.

He starts by holding wide-ranging talks with EU Commission President Jacques Santer and Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, whose



Two monkeys produced from cloned embryos huddle in a room at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Centre. The monkeys, who were born last August, were cloned from cells taken from embryos and marks the first time a species that closely resembles humans has been cloned (Reuters photo)

Izetbegovic criticises Bosnian Serb accord with Yugoslavia

LONDON (AFP) — Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic said Sunday night that an agreement signed last week by Yugoslavia and the Bosnian Serbs on special relations was aimed at obstructing the Dayton Peace Accords and would further destabilize his country, Bosnian Government Radio reported.

"The military aspect of the agreement — especially the announcement of a special military accord between the Serb entity and Yugoslavia — means a disruption of the balance established by the Dayton agreement, which could threaten peace in the entire region," Mr. Izetbegovic said in a statement broadcast by the radio and monitored here by the BBC.

"The agreement shows that the Belgrade regime has not given up its claims on Bosnia-Herzegovina, despite being a signatory of the Dayton agreement and therefore bound by it. On the contrary, this agreement is an obvious and publicly-declared expression of claims on Bosnia-Herzegovina that still exist."

The statement said a number of areas, including foreign policy and trade, customs policy and citizenship were "strictly under the jurisdiction of the institutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the entities' special ties with neighbouring countries cannot therefore apply to them."

Yugoslavia and the Bosnian Serbs signed an agreement Friday establishing "special ties" between them.

The agreement marked a thaw in relations between the regime of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and the Bosnian Serbs whose administration is based at Pale, near Sarajevo.

Under international pressure Mr. Milosevic in August 1994 broke off all official contact with the Bosnian Serb leaders over their refusal to conclude a peace treaty.

Meanwhile, a Bosnian Serb mob attacked and burned nine Muslim homes while Russian peacekeepers stood by and watched, the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR)

said Monday.

More than 150 unarmed Serbs arrived in the village of Gajevi Sunday evening from the neighbouring Serb village of Koraj, said an SFOR spokesman.

He said 20 Russian soldiers stationed in Gajevi watched the attack but did not intervene.

Gajevi's Muslim population fled when they were attacked by Serbs during the Bosnian war.

In January, in a high-profile U.N. attempt to show that refugee returns were working as called for in the Dayton accord, a group of refugees were brought back to the village by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Later in January two prefabricated houses set up by Muslims in the mostly ruined village were torn down by a Serb mob that chased the Muslims from Gajevi.

SFOR announced in January that it would increase patrols in the area to deter further attacks, using U.S. and Russian troops.

And the Bosnian Serb authorities signed an agreement promising that Bosnian Serb police would prevent further attacks on Gajevi.

Last Thursday four of the newly restored houses were blown up, said SFOR. It said the Muslims were not in the village, because they worked there only by day.

SFOR announced Thursday that Russian patrols around the village would be increased.

But on Sunday they decided not to interfere, said SFOR.

"There were 150 Serbs and approximately 20 Russian soldiers. The only way of stopping these people was to use lethal force," said SFOR spokesman Major Andrew Saddleton.

"The commander on the ground made the decision not to use lethal force because the Serb crowd was unarmed and at no time were innocent civilians, SFOR troops, or SFOR equipment under threat."

N. Ireland police foil mortar bomb attack

BELFAST (R) — Security forces in Northern Ireland foiled a suspected Irish Republican Army (IRA) attack Sunday when they found and defused a mortar bomb in a coastal resort, police said.

"It is blatantly clear that this was a murderous attempt by the IRA to kill members of the local security forces," Alan Caldwell, superintendent with the Royal Ulster Constabulary, said in a statement.

Police sealed off an area and evacuated 30 homes in Warrenpoint, south of Belfast, after a series of calls warning them about a device.

"Army bomb experts, after a lengthy operation,

made safe a Mark 16 mortar bomb found concealed in the boot of a car," a police spokesman said.

The device was found near the spot where 18 soldiers were killed in a double bomb attack at Warrenpoint in 1979.

It was the second mortar bomb attempt in less than a week and followed a statement from the IRA Thursday warning that the killing of a British soldier Feb. 12 marked an escalation in its campaign to oust Britain from Northern Ireland.

Stephen Restorick, 23, was killed by a sniper bullet as he spoke to a motorist at a checkpoint near the military helicopter base at Bessbrook, near the Irish border.

Security forces disarmed another powerful mortar bomb, abandoned by the guerrillas after a failed attack on police and troops in Irish nationalist west Belfast, Thursday.

The missile was found near a security base overlooking the busy falls road after the IRA had told news media it had failed to detonate.

IRA violence in recent months has provoked three attacks on Catholic nationalists by banned pro-British loyalist militants. British security sources say a loyalist truce remains in force but is shaky.

Sian Fein, the IRA's political wing, wants an immediate seat at all-party talks on the future of the province.

Albania imposes curfew in bid to end rioting; Berisha reelected

TIRANA (AFP) — Albania's parliament Monday reelected President Sali Berisha for a second term after the government imposed an overnight curfew as part of a state of emergency to end rioting.

State Television said the 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. curfew would be in effect as of Monday evening and that public meetings of more than four people were banned.

Albania's borders with Montenegro to the north were closed to road traffic, the Yugoslav News Agency (Tanjug) reported.

Tirana's decision was sparked by weekend riots in several southern towns touched off by the collapse of pyramid finance schemes in which many Albanians lost their life savings. They now want the government to reimburse them.

The violence left at least 13 dead and prompted parliament to order "armed rebels" to surrender their weapons and explosives by Monday 2:00 p.m. (1300 GMT) or risk being shot on sight by security forces.

Mr. Berisha, 52, was the sole candidate for the presidential post, making his re-election Monday a mere formality. His first five-year term ends Sunday.

Of the deputies attending

the meeting, 113 voted for Mr. Berisha, one voted against and four abstained.

Mr. Berisha's Democratic Party holds a clear majority with 122 of the 140 parliament seats. Opposition parties are boycotting parliament and have called for early elections to put an end to the six-week crisis.

Ambassadors from Austria, Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Italy Switzerland and the United States decided not to attend Mr. Berisha's reelection but sent lower ranking representatives.

"There are questions about why (the election) was called (today), which appears to have been premature," given the fact that Mr. Berisha's term will not end before another six days, a diplomatic source said.

The government's ultimatum to what it called armed rebels was announced after a special meeting of deputies to ratify measures under the state of emergency.

Under Sunday's decree, only people with a special pass can move about during curfew hours.

The television said schools and universities had been closed and working hours set at 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., except for essential businesses like bakeries and hospitals.

Freedom of the press was curtailed, with censorship imposed.

Reports likely to encourage "violence against national security, constitutional order, public security and individual lives" were banned.

However all official statements relating to the state of emergency must be published. The Albanian News Agency (ATA) did not say if foreign media in the country must comply with the restrictions.

ATA said soldiers and reservists who failed to obey orders would be court-martialed.

Road blocks were to be set up at the capital's main access routes where security forces have been authorised to shoot at anyone who refuses to stop.

The interior ministry advised foreigners to leave riot-torn southern towns for their own safety while Mr. Berisha pledged to use all means possible to put down "the rebellion of the red terrorists."

"We are going to react with the greatest severity against all these rebels who want to crush Albania and its democracy," he said in a televised address Sunday night.

Mr. Berisha said that the country's Communist re-

gime which ended in 1992 had been the "worst calamity in the history of Albania."

The worst violence has been in Vlore, where anti-government protesters stormed an army barracks and seized weapons overnight Friday. They threatened to take their popular revolt to Tirana itself if the government did not reimburse money they lost when the Pyramid savings schemes imploded.

Protesters supported by the former Communist opposition Socialist Party blame Mr. Berisha's government for the financial collapse. Mr. Berisha responded by announcing the resignation of the Albanian government Saturday and said he would meet with opposition leaders to forge a solution to the crisis.

But significantly he has ruled out opposition participation in a new government. The opposition wants an interim government set up pending "early free and honest elections." Last year's parliamentary elections were marred by ballot-rigging allegations.

Hunger-striking students in Vlore said they would not call off their action until a neutral government of technocrats was named and fresh elections organized.

Mandela holds talks in Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela held talks here Monday with oil-rich Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah on the second leg of a tour aimed at expanding his country's ties with South East Asia.

The 78-year-old leader arrived in this capital from the Philippines aboard a South African Air Force jet and was welcomed at the airport by Brunei's Foreign Minister Mohammed Bolkiah, a brother of the Sultan.

Mr. Mandela, accompanied by his de facto first lady Graca Machel, widow of former Mozambique President Samora Machel, was later received formally at the royal palace, where he reviewed an honour guard with the sultan.

The two leaders held a one-on-one meeting after bilateral talks with aides, according to a South African delegation member. Details of the discussions were not immediately available.

At the royal ceremony, Mr. Mandela's companion Mrs. Machel, wearing a white tailored suit, stood behind Mr. Mandela and the sultan. She was flanked by the sultan's two wives, who were clad in traditional veiled printed dresses.

Mrs. Machel's high profile during the South East Asian tour has stoked speculation of a second marriage for Mr. Mandela, who divorced his first wife Winnie.

After the palace talks, Mr. Mandela and Mrs. Machel were billeted along with their official delegation at an official guest complex, the Edinburgh Palace.

The South African leader is on a 10-day, four-nation South East Asian tour that will also take him to Singapore and Malaysia.

He was scheduled to tour parts of the Brunei capital on a river boat Tuesday, after which the sultan would host a state dinner.

Mr. Mandela leaves Wednesday for Singapore, where he is to deliver a lecture on his vision for Southern Africa in the 21st century.

Deng's widow scatters his ashes at sea

BEIJING (R) — Weeping uncontrollably, the widow of Deng Xiaoping has scattered the ashes of China's late paramount leader from a plane above China's seas in a final farewell to the man who moulded modern China.

"Daddy, you have returned to the sea, and to nature," Deng Rong, one of his three daughters, sobbed Sunday as the family scattered the ashes mingled with fresh flower petals from a chute in a Russian-made military transport aircraft.

"May you rest in peace," she wept as her mother sobbed at her side, state television showed Monday.

The emotional farewell to the diminutive patriarch who ruled China for 18 years and who died on Feb. 19 aged 92, was in accordance with his last wishes and his lifelong abhorrence for the cult of the personality.

Deng had requested a

low-key funeral, with no lying-in-state for his remains, reflecting his contempt for the near-hysterical frenzy that surrounded his predecessor, Chairman Mao Tsetong.

Mao's body still lies embalmed in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, a morbid memento of China's history of fanatical hero worship.

Deng loved the sea and used to swim surrounded by bodyguards at a seaside resort near Beijing virtually every summer.

Deng's widow, Zhuo Lin, 81, rested her hands in the casket containing Deng's ashes along with brightly-coloured petals and fresh flowers for several minutes before sprinkling her husband's remains onto the water, state television showed.

Deng's three daughters and his two sons, including his eldest son Deng Pufang who has been confined to a wheelchair since he fell from a window after being persecuted by radical Red

Guards during Mao's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, scattered more ashes and flowers out of the plane.

"Deng Xiaoping and Zhuo Lin met in Yan'an in August 1939... They fell in love and got married," Xinhua said. "Deng was then 35 and Zhuo Lin 23. The couple spent 58 years together."

State media gave no hint of the exact location where Deng's ashes were scattered.

However, it said the waves might carry them to Hong Kong and Macau, the British and Portuguese-run territories whose scheduled return to Chinese rule count among Deng's most significant achievements. It said some ashes could also flow towards Taiwan, the one island he failed to recover.

The last physical relics of Deng that now remain in China are his corneas, which he donated to an eye bank — triggering a flood of similar donations nationwide.

China's military needs cash to buy arms

BEIJING (R) — China is boosting its defence budget in 1997, but the People's Liberation Army (PLA) — the world's biggest at three million — is still strapped for cash to buy advanced weapons, military experts said Monday.

China envisages spending 80.57 billion yuan (\$9.7 billion) on defence in 1997, an increase of 14.7 per cent over last year's budget and 12.7 per cent higher than actual spending in 1996, Finance Minister Liu Zhongli said in a budget speech Sunday.

Some military experts say China's actual defence spending was twice the budgeted amount, with budgets hidden or passed off as science and technology and other expenditure.

But China is still strapped for cash to buy destroyers, fighters and submarines. Western experts said.

China is eager to buy two Sovremenny guided-missile destroyers from Russia for about \$800 million, but negotiations have been held up due to a lack of money.

"It's a cheap price. It's one-third the price of a similar Western ship... But the Chinese are short of money and still discussing the price," one Western military expert said.

The Chinese are also looking to buy more Sukhoi 27 fighters and Kilo-class submarines from Russia, the military expert said.

The defence budget would be spent mainly on training, logistics, maintenance and parts. "It'll be a

long time before they can fly and sail the (new) aircraft and ships," said the military expert, who asked not to be identified. "One of the major weaknesses of the Chinese is logistics across all three services."

Beijing's military buildup has caused anxiety among its neighbours, but China vehemently denies it is a threat to Asia or the rest of the world.

With annual inflation reined in to 6.1 per cent in 1996 from 14.8 per cent in 1995, the military appears as if it would have more money to throw around.

"There's more money going into key areas rather than just keeping up with inflation," another Western expert said.

38 dead following U.S. storms

ARKADELPHIA, Arkansas (AFP) — The death toll hit 38 following a weekend of tornadoes and violent weather across a wide swathe from Texas to Ohio, officials said.

President Bill Clinton Sunday declared nine Arkansas counties disaster areas, making them eligible for federal funds after tornadoes caused at least 24 deaths in the state, with at least 200 others injured.

Arkansas was the hardest hit as tornadoes tore through Arkadelphia and the area around Little Rock, the state capital, emergency services spokesman Ray Briggler said.

"The best word that we could use to describe what's

happened here is apocalyptic," Governor Mike Huckabee told ABC Monday, adding that the National Guard had been mobilised.

"It is something equivalent to a huge bombing run from the southwest corner to the northeast corner of Arkansas. We have a wide swathe of devastation where it's just unprecedented in its scope, and it's really draining our resources, because we have such a wide area to try to cover."

In this town of 10,000 people a twister barreled through a six-block area of downtown Saturday, leaving nothing but rubble in its wake.

While there were no official damage estimates, the

tornado destroyed at least one restaurant, an auto repair shop and clipped the Clark County Courthouse, which was built in 1842.

Four victims were found in mobile home parks. Twenty-year-old Matt Mobley was lucky enough to have heeded television warnings, leaving his trailer for a safer area.

When he returned he found nothing but scattered belongings amid strewn metal.

"There is not a damn thing here that can't be replaced," said his father, Charles Mobley, helping his son pull soaked bedding and furniture from the debris.

EU chiefs in Moscow as Yeltsin starts testing week

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin meets European Union (EU) leaders Monday at the start of a week which will test his strength after his long absences from the Kremlin because of illness.

During the week Mr. Yeltsin, 66, is expected to work on a cabinet reshuffle, give a keynote speech to parliament and have talks with Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko.

He starts by holding wide-ranging talks with EU Commission President Jacques Santer and Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, whose

country holds the EU's rotating presidency.

The pair met Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Monday morning. Interfax news agency quoted him as telling them their talks with Mr. Yeltsin would give a "powerful new boost" to Moscow's relations with the EU.

He hoped for progress on a still unrattified accord designed to forge links between the two sides and liberalise trade.

The EU leaders are likely to back Moscow's political and economic reforms and urge Mr. Yeltsin to prepare

Russia fully for membership of the World Trade Organisation. Other likely topics include organised crime and the fight against illegal drugs.

The prospect that some of Russia's former Communist allies in eastern and central Europe will eventually join the EU causes much less concern in Moscow than the planned eastward expansion of NATO, which Russia says threatens its security.

Aides to NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana are expected in Moscow Tuesday ahead of Mr. Solana's visit next weekend to con-

tinue the search for a deal to ease Russia's concerns.

Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov briefed Mr. Yeltsin Sunday on his latest talks with NATO member states. "Talks made progress in several areas," the Presidential Press Office said.

But it made clear major differences with NATO remained.

Mr. Yeltsin got some comfort when Russian and Chechen negotiators said they hoped a political agreement, amounting to a formal peace treaty, would be signed in the next eight days.

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Value system needs overhaul

IN HIS meeting Thursday with parliamentarians, public figures and journalists Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat talked candidly about many issues: women's rights, passport regulations, misuse of power, the new election law and the fight against corruption. In itself the exercise was commendable since it availed the minister, who had not said much publicly since he took office last year, and his invitees a rare opportunity to exchange views on the record on such a wide range of sensitive issues. But the discussions also revealed weaknesses in the system that should be neither overlooked nor put aside, for now or later. The three new draft legislations on women's rights announced by the minister, for instance, promise to remove several discriminatory measures still applied against females in the country, but not all of them. Granting women and their children the right to acquire passports of their own is certainly a step in the right direction. However, it is not nearly enough to remove all forms of gender discrimination in our society. There is apparently no new plans to grant children of Jordanian women married to foreigners the Jordanian nationality. Continued discrimination against women in this vein does not lend support to all the pious talks about according the two sexes equal treatment before the law. This is where the minister of interior's initiatives fell short of living up to the Constitution and the various conventions that Jordan has ratified.

On the passport issue, we fail to understand how the Jordanian nationality that was legally acquired could be taken away by a political decision. The least that we expect is the enactment of a new legislation that purports to amend previous pertinent laws. Even then, the effect of any such new laws cannot be retroactive. Dr. Khleifat did not offer any assurances on this score by reaffirming the principle that legally acquired citizenship cannot be denied or revoked without a court decision on the basis of the law that was in force when citizenship was granted.

Even more troubling is the treatment of the so-called "tribal jalwa," meaning "exile," when a crime is committed. To our surprise, instead of working determinedly and hard to renounce tribal justice as archaic, unfair and contrary to Islam and the rule of law, the minister unveiled yet another scheme that aims to breathe additional life into it, albeit in different form, by regulating its application and prescribing when and how the forced exile of the perpetrator of the alleged crime (and/or his close relatives) could be exercised.

We are fast approaching the turn of the century and there is no excuse to perpetuate a system of justice that belongs only to history. Why the government at this late hour would try to regulate tribal justice instead of repealing it altogether is something that we cannot comprehend. Tribal justice, among many other social and cultural values, have long outlived their usefulness and applicability. We need to look no further than on what is happening in our worn-out bureaucracy, to which His Majesty the King alluded the other day and of whose tremendous problems the prime minister is aware, to see just how much we need to come up with an altogether new value system in this country. The time to start is now. Putting off debate of the problem will not make it go away.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for the weekly Al Majd described Israel's decision to establish yet another Jewish settlement close to Arab Jerusalem as an act of defiance directed at those Arab regimes that established relations with the Jewish state. Fahed Rimawi said that statements of condemnation against the Israeli moves are not enough, and the Arab states have a duty towards the Arab Nation and should either sever of freeze ties with Israel since statements have no value. At the same time, the Arab leaders ought to meet at the summit level to consider joint action against Israel not only because of its defiance and its planned settlements but also to deal with the question of continued occupation of Arab territories, said the writer. The Arab states that have established links with Israel should realise that the new settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim constitutes the last link of a long chain of settlements to isolate the Arab city and cut it off from the rest of West Bank with the intention of creating new facts on the ground and perpetuate Israel's annexation of the Arab city, continued the writer. Arab states which supported the Oslo accords ought to reconsider their position and examine the new facts created by the Likud government of Israel, he said. As to the factions which have been opposing the Oslo agreement, they ought to escalate their armed resistance against Israel and further explosions and daring attacks on the enemy, said the writer who cited Hizbollah's armed resistance in southern Lebanon as a model that should be copied on all fronts.

The View from Fourth Circle

God, the devil and a haunted hill's unspoken ghosts

By Rami G. Khouri

THE CURRENT dispute over Israel's plans to build housing units in the Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa region of Jerusalem is the most significant Arab-Israeli political confrontation of recent years because it compresses several different contests into one and touches on the most central, emotional issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is interesting how this Jerusalem-related issue — which has absolutely no strategic or security implications and involves relatively small amounts of land — should elicit such powerful emotions and headline positions on both sides.

This is not a battle about a hill; it is a contest by two peoples who both need to vanquish their history and to retrieve their humanity. It is also a contest which marks the real start of the final status negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and which may also mark the moment of reckoning in the whole Oslo peace process.

Clearly, in my view, Israel's actions are neither legally nor politically sound within the context of an ongoing peace process by which Israel slowly achieves acceptance in this predominantly Arab/Muslim region. Israel's provocative actions, however, have been countered to date by equally ineffective Arab responses. The statements and actions of the PLO and the PNA have been both predictable and ineffective, including holding peaceful demonstrations and prayers, staging a general strike, threatening to declare a Palestinian state (wasn't that done already in 1988?), warning about the end of the peace process, and accusing Israel of disregarding international law, U.N. resolutions, the will of the international community, and the terms of the Madrid and Oslo peace processes. Arab and Islamic states' diplomacy does not seem to have fared much better, though ongoing quiet contacts may prove to be more productive.

Several reasons explain this Arab dilemma. The most serious is the imbalance of power between Israel and the Arabs, which was formalised in the skewed terms of the Oslo process. The weakness of the Palestinians, and their inability to overcome it, are more evident as the process leaves behind the easy achievements of the last three years and zeroes in on the tough, core issues of land, sovereignty, refugees, settlements and Jerusalem.

The second problem for the Arabs is that we are using traditional, largely unproved diplomatic measures against the quadruple centrality of Jerusalem in the Israeli mind-set.

a) In the longer historical sweep of things, Jerusalem is the existential and emotional symbol, par excellence, of everything good and bad for Jews — of Jewish weakness and vulnerability in the past, and of Jewish strength and self-assertion today. Twice in their history the Jewish people were exiled from Jerusalem and suffered the destruction of their temple there. The city to them is an affirmation of their vitality and durability as a nation as much as it is a mere political capital.

b) In the overall peace-making picture since the early

1990s, maintaining sole Israeli sovereignty over all of the old city and adjacent parts of Jerusalem is the only significant issue on which there is a strong consensus within Israel — and there are very few things on which there is political or social consensus in Israel. The Israeli ministerial committee and the cabinet unanimously approved the building plans in Jerusalem, though there was no such unanimity on the Hebron accord. In recent public opinion polls, over two-thirds of Jewish Israelis routinely say that the building plans for Jerusalem should proceed, regardless of opposition by the Arabs, the United States or Europe.

c) Jerusalem is critical for the immediate political well-being of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is waging two simultaneous battles — one against his right wing that accused him of selling out in Hebron and in adopting the Oslo process, and one against the Labour Party and the left whom he accused of being soft on Jerusalem during the election campaign last spring. Netanyahu's two most effective campaign slogans last year were that Labour was soft on terror and soft on Jerusalem. He will compromise on almost every other issue, but not on Jerusalem. We should also remember, in this respect, what happened in the case of the Jerusalem tunnel which sparked such violence last September: the tunnel remains open today, as Netanyahu insisted it would.

"This piece of land on Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa elicits the most frightening spectres of dehumanisation and eternal dispersion and diasporas for both sides. It is a haunted hill, whose ghosts for both sides must be addressed with suitable respect, calm and rationality, or else the entire peace process might collapse..."

d) For many Israelis and Arabs, Jerusalem is also a litmus test of Israel's standing vis-à-vis the two main sources of global authority today — the United States and the will of the international community as represented in U.N. resolutions and global conventions. Israel will fight hard to prevent a change in its policies due to pressure from the United States or other international quarters (though such pressure appears unlikely in any case, especially given U.S. congressional support for moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, for example). For many Israelis, having sole decision-making powers in Jerusalem is a powerful symbol of Jewish sovereignty, while suc-

cumbing to international pressure would be seen in Israel as a sign of weakness, vulnerability and a creeping lack of independence — everything that Zionism's establishment of the state of Israel was supposed to eliminate once and for all.

For these reasons, the Palestinians and Arabs must summon much more political rigour and diplomatic coherence in responding to the provocative Israeli plans for Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa. Issuing angry statements, appealing to Bill Clinton, closing shops for a day, hanging out with Larry King, threatening to stop the peace process and demanding the implementation of U.N. resolutions will have little impact beyond raising Arab frustrations, heightening Israel's determination to maintain its policy course and probably pushing the dispute towards potential violence on the ground.

This is the first time in modern history when an issue of central, powerful political and emotional importance to both Arabs and Israelis has presented itself for diplomatic adjudication: for all other progress to date, including the Egypt and Jordan peace accords and the withdrawals in Palestine under the Oslo process to date, dealt with secondary issues that did not get anywhere near the core of the Zionist-Palestinian Arab nationalist struggle in Palestine/Israel.

Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa is not a mere place or incident within the Arab-Israeli conflict: it is the Arab-Israeli conflict. Given its emotional and politically symbolic importance, it may also determine the fate of the whole Oslo peace process.

The potential for violence is great, because both sides see this particular dispute over a single hill as a symbol for the larger, unspoken horrors that they have experienced in the past, and the cruel fate that might await them in the future if they appear to be weak. Israelis might look at their stance on Jerusalem and see themselves being sent to Babylon again if they give in; Palestinians might look at their stance on Jerusalem and see themselves forever living in tents on the Libyan-Egyptian border if they give in. How ironic that a holy city — The Holy City — should prompt such fears and selfishness. Is this a city of God, or also of the devil?

This piece of land on Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa elicits the most frightening spectres of dehumanisation and eternal dispersion and diasporas for both sides. It is a haunted hill, whose ghosts for both sides must be addressed with suitable respect, calm and rationality, or else the entire peace process might collapse — a possibility that would probably elicit little regret on either side, if we are to judge by public opinion trends today. Such possibilities of a return to warfare need to be spelled out clearly by leaders on both sides, along with their threats and demands. Is the only option "Jerusalem or war", for both sides? Or is there a more merciful alternative in this land of many prophets who preached mercy and tolerance, and in whose names we all claim deed to this haunted hill?

Palestine — passive resistance should be the alternative to fighting Israel

By Dr. Hendrik Sven Weiler

I HAVE now for years followed the process of negotiations between Israel and the Palestine National Authority (PNA). The years have been remarkable for the lack of real progress, the paucity of benefits to the Palestinians of the West Bank, and the mendacity with which Israel has conducted the negotiations. At the same time, I have also been struck by the rigidity of the tactics used by the PNA, either it is endless talk or negotiations or in violence and rock throwing. Both these play right into the hands of the Israeli hardliners and colonists: hence the Netanyahu government which is dominated by them.

By dragging out the negotiations, Israel gains more time to expand existing Jewish "settlements" (which are really colonial enclaves) and found new ones, without giving the Palestinians really anything much in return. Time after time, the PNA is faced with a simple "fait accompli" — a new colonial outpost is set up or an existing one is expanded: more Palestinian land is "seized" (actually stolen since there is rarely any compensation), and the Palestinian territory shrinks some more. After a few more years of this dragged out process, there will be little land left for a Palestinian state — Israeli colonists backed by the Israeli army will control most of it. And what is then more natural but to clearly incorporate the West Bank into a "greater Israel," leaving a few ghettos of cheap Palestinian labour for the dirty work the Israelis do not want to do. This is similar to what happened in South Africa with its Bantustans, or the Jewish ghettos in Europe and Russia.

By resorting to violence and rock throwing, the

Palestinians play into Israeli hands in another way. Once violence is used, the Israelis immediately use their much superior force to kill and jail Palestinians, seize more land, bulldoze houses for "security reasons," and publicly point to the violence to continue convincing the Israelis themselves that military occupation and repression is the correct policy. Outside Israel, photos and video clips are shown of Palestinian violence to justify the occupation and the slow pace of negotiations, to suppress dissent regarding the headline approach and raise more millions from American Jews. At the same time, this information is used to fan further anti-Palestinian feelings among American politicians by the very effective Jewish political network of very well-financed lobbyists.

There is, in my view, a much more effective approach that the Palestinians can take and which involves neither dragged-out and generally unproductive negotiations nor equally non-productive resorts to violence. What I am talking about is the use of peaceful, passive, but very wide spread resistance to Israeli actions, whether political, military or by settlers. This in effect takes as its model the "Civil Rights Movement" in the U.S., which was used to emancipate the American blacks from white repression in the southern U.S. after World War II.

This passive resistance must be well and systematically organised, and the active people well trained (I am sure that former political activists can be found in the U.S., who would be willing to volunteer to do training, but would not count on the Jewish former civil rights activists. Their loyalties are to Israel, regardless of their political philosophy). The active organisers have to set up an extensive communica-

tions network with ties to the world TV, press and other media. They must be well supplied with video cameras and film cameras to record events, and numerous routes to get the film outside Israel, since the main focus of the Israeli army, secret police and colonists is to suppress information about what is really going on — instead of the sanitised version that Israel wants to have shown. Such media ties would include all the main news networks, such as the CNN, Reuters, etc., and rely often on non-U.S. networks because of the pro-Israeli bias of the American ones.

Second, all Israeli government, military, secret police and colonist actions detrimental to Palestinian interests must be protested against immediately. These protests must be well-organised, peaceful (at all times), massive, involve men, women and children (especially the last two), and always be filmed when they happen. For each protest, large and visible signs must be present with messages in English and Arabic, which are easy to read and show up well on film and video.

Whenever the demonstrators are attacked (and they always will be), the demonstrators sit down, link arms and continue with slogans such as "stop Israeli violence now!", and similar. The demonstrators have to accept killings, beatings, jailings and later torture by Israelis, since that is their regular response. Each case must then in turn be publicised internationally. These activities can be expanded and modified to suit the circumstances.

Third, the Palestinians need to start taking international, and well-publicised, legal actions against Israel as well as other Jewish organisations. An immediate legal action that can be taken is to initiate a counter-claim

is Swiss courts against Swiss banks, to get compensation for Palestinian claims from the Nazi gold that was purportedly seized from the Jews during the Nazi period. Similar legal actions can be taken in other countries. At the same time, legal action should be started at the World Court to get compensation for Palestinian houses, land, businesses and Palestinians who were killed, wounded or tortured by the Israelis. Similarly, legal actions should be launched in the U.S., Canada and other select countries against Jewish organisations which support Jewish colonisation of Palestinian lands, seizure of Palestinian properties, and other violations. Relevant cases can be initiated in such courts against the massive abuse of Palestinian civil rights. All these court cases should be well publicised at all times.

As a former North American, what I see is a long string of betrayals, oppression and despoliation of Palestinian ancestral lands by foreigners, Israelis. At this stage, which may appear positive to many because of Hebron, the prognosis for Palestinians is, in my view, pessimistic, unless a more concerted action is taken to protect what little the Palestinians have left, and the hope to have an independent country. But the present (deliberately by Israel) dragged out negotiations, or the lurching violence against Israeli military might will lead to nothing else but further erosion of what little is left — and then a unilateral incorporation of that into a "greater Israel."

Despite appearances, other tactics are available — and must be used.

LETTERS

An imaginary divide getting real?

To the Editor:

EVER SINCE the Palestinian immigration "forced or otherwise" to Jordan started, they were considered as an important segment of the Jordanian society. They were granted Jordanian citizenship and were integrated in the society as such, a society they helped to build and develop as their own. Their loyalty has never been in question despite their yearning for Palestine.

Today, the relationship between eastern and western Jordanians remains as strong as ever. The economic and social relations are too intertwined to undo. Religion, language, culture and political aspirations are one. There is no way of knowing when talking to a Jordanian, whether he/she is easterner or westerner, nor do Jordanians care. Such are the facts. But the seeds of doubt are being planted.

The issue of "national unity" or "dual loyalty" is a fashionable subject in Jordan today. The debate has degenerated into a discussion based on the narrow interests of the few against the interests of the country and the people. An ex-prime minister and current member of parliament (MP) (westerner) on the one side and a current senior minister, MP and party leader (easterner) on the other side, are the poles of the debate.

Many local commentators see the debate as an attempt at manipulating and polarising the electorate through creating an imaginary "divide" of "dual loyalty" in order to capitalise on this "divide" when the polling stations open later on this year.

But what the protagonists of this debate seem to forget, or choose to ignore, is that once the "divide" is perceived by the people as real, they will not be able to control or contain the events that will follow.

With this in mind, it has been reported that His Majesty King Hussein hinted at ending the discussion. The poles of the debate abided, their followers did not.

J. Momani,
P.O. Box 960,
Amman.

Who comes first?

To the Editor:

I WAS outraged to learn that the Jews are trying to reclaim possession and wealth of holocaust victims, most of which are not even alive, from Swiss banks. My advice for the Swiss bankers would be to propose the return of stolen Palestinian properties, lands and possessions prior to any compromise.

Basim Najjar,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

مركز الصحافة

Government will abide by court ruling against extradition — Dughmi

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi said Monday that a recent ruling made by the Court of Cassation not to extradite a Jordanian citizen wanted for arson to the U.S. was correct and the government would abide by that ruling.

Mr. Dughmi said the issue was whether the extradition treaty signed between the Jordanian and American governments was constitutional or not.

Jordan and the U.S. signed an extradition treaty in 1995, but Parliament has to ratify the document before it could take effect.

"The government has repeatedly said, even before the Court of Cassation's recent ruling, that this treaty is unconstitutional because it did not complete its constitutional procedures," Mr. Dughmi said.

"I have informed the U.S. several times that we in Jordan still have certain reservations on some of the articles, and the Jordanian and the American sides should negotiate the matter," Mr. Dughmi added.

He said once the two sides agree to amend some of the articles which Jordan has reservations on, "then

we will present it to Parliament to be officially endorsed."

"As for the current extradition treaty, the government does not want to give it to Parliament to be endorsed until the articles were amended," Mr. Dughmi said.

The Court of Cassation recently ruled in favour of an appeal filed by Bassam Qassem, 34, a naturalised American citizen of Jordanian origin, who was wanted in the U.S. in connection with an arson attack in Chicago.

Mr. Dughmi also said that the Jordanian government had never handed over any Jordanian wanted abroad.

"Instead we ask the concerned country to send the files of Jordanian suspects to be tried in Jordan," Mr. Dughmi said.

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Hisham Taji denied last week during a parliamentary session extraditing any Jordanian citizen to the U.S. or any other country.

Mr. Taji said in the case of Iyad Nijem, a Jordanian wanted in the U.S. in connection with bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in 1993, "willingly surrendered himself and was not extradited by the Jordanian authorities."

Iran criticises Albright

CAIRO (AP) — Iran on Monday criticised U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for saying that Iran and Iraq pose a threat to Europe and the Middle East and must be contained.

The state-run Tehran Times said in an editorial that the so-called "dual containment" policy had not won support outside the United States.

"Europe has unequivocally stated that it is strongly opposed to U.S. unilateral measures," the English-language paper said.

"(Europe) has emphasised it will continue its dialogue with Iran."

The paper said Ms. Albright was "daydreaming," if she thought she could convince other nations to follow the U.S. lead.

Another English daily, the Iran news, accused Mr Albright of "the same old anti-Iranian rhetoric" of her predecessors.

The paper denied U.S. allegations that Iran is seeking to build nuclear weapons, saying the country "has repeatedly announced that the doors of Iran's weapons facilities are open" for international inspection.

The editorial advised Ms Albright to "face realities, because disinformation campaigns have now become an outmoded political weapon."

Supporters of the religious party Shas were in an uproar Sunday after reports their spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, would be questioned by police in connection with an influence-trading scandal that has rocked the government.

The episode highlighted the deep cultural rift between European-descended Ashkenazi Jews and Shas' low-income constituency of Middle Eastern — or Sephardi — background.

Israel's 4.7 million Jews are about evenly divided between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, with the latter still dominant economically and socially.

Shas, whose leaders are devoutly religious, won 10 of 120 Knesset seats in the May election — reflecting the appeal of their Sephardi renaissance message among many secular Sephardim as well.

Yossi Sarid, the leader of the avowedly secular Meretz Party, voiced many Israelis' outrage at the sanctification of the rabbi.

"These people should understand that... With all due respect, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef is a citizen like any other and not above the law," Mr. Sarid told Israel Radio.

"Mr. Sarid doesn't understand the rule of law," But Shas supporters have long seethed at what they view as the Ashkenazi-dominated legal system's hounding of the party's political leader Aryeh Deri, who was forced to resign as interior minister in 1993 to face an array of corruption charges.

The scandal which now threatens Benjamin Netanyahu's government also involves Mr. Deri, whom Israel TV has alleged blackmailed the premier into appointing an attorney general who promised him a plea-bargain.

Roni Bar-On resigned Jan. 12 after just one day in office.

Several days later, Israel TV broadcast its report that in exchange for his appointment Shas was to provide the decisive cabinet votes for an agreement on giving the Palestinians control of

the West Bank city of Hebron. Mr. Netanyahu's government also depends on Shas for its parliament majority.

Police launched an investigation, and Israeli media reported last week that Mr. Deri, Justice Minister Tzvi Hanegbi and Mr. Netanyahu aide Avigdor Lieberman will likely face charges ranging from conspiracy to breach of trust in the case.

Police questioned Mr. Netanyahu last month and warned him he could face charges too. The Maariv daily newspaper said Mr. Netanyahu would be questioned again next week, but that police had no proof that he backed the Mr. Bar-On

appointment due to pressure from Mr. Deri.

In addition to Mr. Deri, Mr. Suissa and the other Shas cabinet member, Labor Minister Eli Yishai, have already been interrogated.

But Benny Elbaz, a well-known singer and Shas backer, said that if Rabbi Yosef himself is approached, Sephardi resentment will boil over and "we will have an intifadah" — an allusion to the 1987-93 Palestinian uprising against Israel.

Police investigator Yaacov Grossman said the inquiry would not be influenced by pressure. "We don't shrink from interrogating anyone we need to interrogate," he said.



KING VISITS ORPHANAGE: His Majesty King Hussein chats with children during a visit he paid on Monday to the Al Hussein Welfare Institute in Amman (photo by Yousef Allan)

International group seeks world action to lift Israeli curbs on Gaza students and academics

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Members of the Gaza Students Campaign (GSC), an international coalition of students and academics, on Monday delivered a petition to Israeli embassies in Bonn, Brasilia, the Hague, Ottawa, London, Paris, Washington D.C. and Wellington.

A corresponding professors' statement, with more than two hundred signatures from academics will also be presented at the embassies," he added.

According to Gamal Abu Ali, one of the GSC coordinators in the United States, the petition urges Israel to "recognise the importance of education to the peace process, and to guarantee academic freedom for the students, teachers and staff of Gaza who work in the West Bank."

Petition organisers of the GSC, which was initiated by Nick Guyatt, a graduate student from Cambridge University following his visit to the West Bank, have

collected 5,000 signatures on 40 college campuses around the world.

Mr. Abu Ali told the Jordan Times Monday: The student petition were to be taken to Israeli embassies in Bonn, Brasilia, the Hague, Ottawa, London, Paris, Washington D.C. and Wellington.

"They (the restrictions) violate the provisions of the Israel-PLO interim agreement to guarantee safe passage between the Gaza Strip and West Bank," Mr. Abu Ali pointed out.

He said that Gaza students had resorted to "sneaking out" of the Gaza Strip to reside in the West Bank — illegal under Israeli law — in order to complete their studies.

"These students live in constant fear of being caught by Israeli authorities," said Mr. Abu Ali.

A rule relating to the Israeli government's policy of collective travel bans stipulates that four permits must be obtained by Gazans wishing to travel to the West Bank.

"They must obtain one permit to leave Gaza, one for transit through Israel, one for residing in the West Bank, and finally one

which authorises renewal of a permit to reside there every four months," explained Mr. Abu Ali.

However, he said, in reality, a student or academic willing to follow these lengthy and complex procedures is still unlikely to be granted permission to attend a university in the West Bank.

"Despite many applications, no Gaza students or academics have been granted permits during this school year," he stated.

That rejection of applications is given orally and there is therefore no right of appeal, he said.

The GSC petition calls for Israel to "introduce academic permits and a standardised, open system of procedures for dealing with applications."

"We hope that this petition will finally bring an end to the current situation of a whole generation being denied their academic rights," Mr. Abu Ali said.

Exploring during Mr. Kinkel's visit here are prospects for German financing for joint water projects between Jordan and Israel as part of European Union assistance to help build peace in the Middle East. EU-financed feasibility studies on the projects are almost complete, and Jordan and Israel are seeking definite financial commitments before proceeding with the projects.

Germany, which is among the top aid donors to Jordan, has provided 55 million marks to the Kingdom to help build a "social safety net" to address problems of under-developed areas while absorbing economic reforms.

The assistance is in addition to 40 million marks that the German government is providing as part of an annual aid protocol with Jordan.

Germany also has about 140 million marks earmarked for the Middle East after it halted aid to Israel in 1996 when the per capita income in the Jewish

state rose above \$15,000.

Under German policy, only countries with less than \$15,000 per capita income are eligible to receive German government grants.

According to diplomats, the German government will provide the aid on a project-by-project basis.

The German foreign minister will proceed from here to the self-rule territories and then to Israel for talks with Palestinian and Israeli leaders before returning home.

Mr. Kinkel's visit, the third to Jordan as foreign minister, comes at a time of an Arab-Israeli crisis over Israeli moves to build more settlements in the occupied territories.

Germany is a strong supporter of the Middle East peace process and, as such, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to come under German pressure to rescind his recent decision to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem that has posed serious question marks to the course of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

time Mr. Clinton personally and publicly decried the decision announced last week by his ally, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Last year, the U.S. administration also criticised Israel's opening of a new entrance to a tunnel near Islamic holy sites, which sparked the worst violence in years.

But Monday's condemnation from Mr. Clinton was more direct and came after Syria voiced scepticism that the United States would pressure Mr. Netanyahu.

"I believe that the U.S. will only revitalise its role in the peace process when it feels a real desire from Netanyahu to move forward," Syria's top negotiator with Israel, Walid Al Moallem, told the Egyptian government daily Al Ahran.

Apart from his criticism of the settlement project, Mr. Clinton declined to take a stand on the border dispute over Jerusalem.

He said it was a "final status" issue which must be worked out in accord with the 1993 agreement on Mideast peace negotiations.

"I do not believe that... the United States can serve any useful purpose by saying — or especially by doing — anything that seems to prejudge what should be a final status issue between the two parties," Mr. Clinton said.

"I think that would be a big mistake," he added.

The president, however, voiced general optimism about the Mideast peace process, which he has made a priority of his presidency.

Clinton decries Israeli plan

(Continued from page 1)

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OPEC seen losing more ground to outside producers

ABU DHABI (AFP) — OPEC will continue to lose ground to independent oil producers as huge investments and advanced technology further boost their output capacity, a U.S. energy expert said Monday.

Non-OPEC production has steadily grown over the past years and is projected to climb by two million barrels per day (bpd) to around 45 million bpd in 1997, nearly 1.75 times the output of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), said Jerry Schuyler, vice president of ARCO International oil and gas company and managing director of ARCO Middle East and Central Asia.

"Driving this increase in non-OPEC production is, of course, a greater level of exploration and production investment in the non-OPEC countries," he told an international oil and gas conference in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"During the past five years, for example, such investments in non-OPEC countries are estimated to have been over \$200 billion while for the same period, the investments in OPEC countries were less than \$45 billion. This is less than 20 per cent of the total investment worldwide."

Mr. Schuyler said non-OPEC crude production was expected to rise sharply over the next years as world firms are more tempted to invest there, new

technologies are invented and world market competition is growing.

He said he believed Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil heavyweights, which control 60 per cent of the world's crude wealth, would try to maintain their current production levels to keep prices firm.

"Non-OPEC oil production is going to continue to increase significantly in the years ahead to meet projected growth in world demand," he said.

"This is facilitated by the fact that there are so many new areas outside of OPEC opening up to outside capital, primarily from large international oil companies and to new technology," he added.

"It is also facilitated by the extraordinary efforts we have seen in the last 15 years among the non-OPEC oil producers to increase their market share, not only through new development and redevelopment, but also in making exploration more attractive to outside investors," Mr. Schuyler indicated.

Several Gulf states are considering readmitting foreign partners they kicked out of their energy sector more than two decades ago in order to secure technology and funds for the development of their oil fields.

A recent independent study in the region said it doubted Gulf producers would be able to fund their

energy expansion plans after the year 2000 as their budgets are reeling under heavy deficits due to weak crude prices.

Mr. Schuyler said Gulf states and other members of the 11-nation OPEC needed to create a better investment climate to lure foreign firms.

Although OPEC has vast oil resources, substantial quantities of crude could be extracted through advanced technology in other parts of the world, he added.

"Oil and gas investments are long-term investments. In order to recoup those investments, companies like ARCO need long-term, stable commercial relationships, really more like partnerships, which carry through changes in legislative and political leadership," he said.

"Oil and gas contracts must be seamless in this respect, or the perceived political risk will act as a deterrent to investment," the energy expert cautioned.

He said he was convinced Middle East oil producers appreciated the policy investment considerations needed to attract foreign capital.

"I am optimistic that this appreciation will produce many good opportunities for cooperation between the host governments and foreign oil companies in the next several years," Mr. Schuyler concluded.

MOSCOW (R) — Cabinet changes planned by President Boris Yeltsin will aim to ease the hardships facing millions of Russians, but analysts said there was little chance of a quick and painless economic fix.

Russian ministers, their economy battered by five years of market reforms, are struggling to unravel a web of wage and payments arrears which have left many workers and pensioners living below the poverty line.

Tax revenues remain stubbornly low and the International Monetary Fund, annoyed at Russia's inability to meet ambitious budget plans, is set to delay handing over the latest tranche of a \$10 billion three-year loan.

"There is no miracle solution, and it is going to be very bloody," said Christopher Granville, chief economist at United City Bank in Moscow. "The crisis in public finances has deep structural causes."

Mr. Yeltsin, returning to the political fray after a long absence through illness, highlighted Russia's social problems this week and hinted a government reshuffle was on the cards.

"Maybe we need some changes, maybe we need some names, maybe we need some people to be changed in the government," he told Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in remarks broadcast on television.

"An opinion poll showed that most Russians were unhappy with the government, the premier and the president... The main thing is that the government cannot cope with (delayed) pensions, wages and payments," he said.

Newspapers speculated — not for the first time — that Mr. Chernomyrdin himself could be on the way out, but the Kremlin has denied that this is the case.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said Tuesday that the planned government changes would aim to deepen economic reforms. "We have to roll up sleeves and get down to hard work... We have to work at the micro-economic level," he said.

Izvestia newspaper Wednesday tipped reformers Anatoly Chubais and Yegor Gaidar for roles in a reshuffled government.

Both are bitterly unpopular with Russia's conservative parliament and

'Russia has lot of cleaning up to do to become a normal country'

while Mr. Chubais is currently playing a big political role as Mr. Yeltsin's chief of staff, the Kremlin gave no signs of being ready to summon back Mr. Gaidar, an economist with no strong political base or public backing.

Mr. Gaidar, 40, launched Russia's first radical pro-market reform programme in 1992, but his reformist party failed to muster enough votes to win seats in the lower house of parliament in elections held in December 1995.

Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Harvard Institute for

International Development and a one-time adviser to the Russian government, told Reuters Financial Television on Wednesday that he was unhappy with the way Russia was governed.

"The government in the last few years has spent much too much time figuring who is going to pocket what assets and much too little thinking about how to balance the books," he said.

"The government has given away vast amounts of natural resources and ended up quite short in

terms of paying the basic bills like pensions... I do not think Russia has been properly governed in recent years," he emphasised.

Mr. Sachs said there were signs of an economic turnaround after years of decline, but he added:

"Hyperinflation has been broken but it has been broken in a context which has created massive inequalities of wealth, enormous cynicism and enormous corruption. Russia has a lot of cleaning up to do to become a normal country."

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can at this time add to your income and take care of property repairs, so long as they are not too costly. Don't disagree with a trusted advisor. Set up a budget and stay within it so that you won't be short of funds.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you labour on improving your feelings of security today, you will be much happier. Get out socially later this evening and you can shake off the discouraging mood you're in and make a good impression towards others.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Listen only to advice from people you know you can trust today, new contacts will steer you wrong. Be careful in motion, especially while on the highway, thereby eliminating any potential difficulties you could encounter.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your mate could have some strange ideas today which should not be taken seriously. Use your common sense in dealing with business matters and thereby you will notice that your endeavours will become successful.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You should not allow a fellow business associate waste your time today or prevent you from starting a new project which you know will become successful. Handle credit and career matters intelligently.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Pay special attention today to the details of anything you are involved in; if you regret it in the days ahead. Be sure you get plenty of rest this evening, since the days ahead will be quite demanding on your nerves.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't begin any new recreation today which will upset your mate or you could notice a difficult situation developing. Show that you are devoted, and find something which you can enjoy together at home.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can at last reach an agreement today with a fellow associate and solve a mutual difficulty. Don't let a home concern disrupt your routine at this time or you could notice that there would be hostility there.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get your workload cleared up early today, superiors will be impressed with your efficiency. You should not allow a friend to distract you from this or you won't gain the success which you are seeking.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can have a fine time with your mate today, however, don't be extravagant or you'll regret it in the days ahead. Simple pleasures are still the best, and they should be treasured for what can be provided.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you're going to be away for sometime, make sure the home situation concerning your loved ones is harmonious before you leave. Be more thoughtful to your loved ones in the days ahead so that harmony can exist.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Giving unrequested information to others today will not gain their favour or help you to get ahead. Be more brief and to-the-point or otherwise you could lose their attention, and the just of the conversation will disappear.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6623	0.6173	1.4740	120.65	1.3678	1693.70	1.9046	6.7154
GB Sterling	1.6180	2.7420	1.0000	2.3883	195.44	2.2157	2738.90	3.3086	8.2811
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4022	0.5111	1.2215	1.0000	1.1334	14.63	157.71	4.7387
CA Dollar	0.7331	1.2238	0.4538	1.0767	0.8779	1.0000	127.06	1.3756	4.0453
IT Lira	0.0008	0.9991	0.3643	0.8571	1405.48	0.8077	11.24	3.3746	1.9363
FR Franc	0.1750	0.2960	0.1079	25.7897	21.08	0.2393	33.30	33.3000	1.0000

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Previous
Brent	19.85	19.50
WTI	19.25	19.00
Bony	19.55	19.50
Dubai	17.25	17.00
UL Gas	197.00	195.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4454	0.18481	0.38342	32.1854
KW Dinar	3.2998	5.5859	2.03707	4.8855	398.248
CY Pound	1.968	3.3308	1.2143	2.9007	237.365

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	362	362.5
Silver (oz's)	4.5	4.55
Platinum (oz's)	387	388
AE (3 Months)	N/A	N/A
CU (3 Months)	N/A	N/A
Zinc (3 Months)	N/A	N/A
Lead (3 Months)	N/A	N/A
NI (3 Months)	N/A	N/A

Currency Deposit Rates (Bld)					
Period	1-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	1-5
Money	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.25	5.42	5.55	5.72	5.87
JPY	0.50	0.46	0.46	0.37	0.53
FRF	3.20	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.35
ITL	7.35	7.32	7.16	7.03	7.05

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	6844.28	-33.48	-0.49	6877.35	6822.1
	S&P 500	1050.08	-5.12	-0.48	1055.5	1045.5
London	FT-SE 100	4299.3	-4	-0.21	4300.3	4297.3
	NIKKEI 225	14000.0	-100.0	-0.71	14000.0	13900.0
Paris	CAC 40	2600.02	-7.53	-0.29	2624.97	2594.67
Frankfurt	DAX	3457.5	-10.5	-0.30	3468.0	3457.5

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Deliveries
Coffee (c/lbs)	158.08	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	311.2	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	22.72	Spot
Barley (c/lbs)	2.38	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
DE Mark	0.4178	0.4198
FR Franc	0.1237	0.1243
NL Guilder	0.3711	0.373

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Libyan leader urges privatisation

MISRATA, Libya (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi called for the privatisation of state-owned industrial firms, including the giant Libyan Company for Iron and Steel.

"Make the Libyans own all plants. Who told you that ownership was banned?" Colonel Qadhafi said Sunday night on the 20th anniversary of the introduction of a system of rule by the masses or "jamahiriya." This change considerably limited the role of the private sector in the North African country.

"I do not agree for one person to own a plant... But

agree for a group of Libyans to own the shares of a company," the Libyan leader told a rally attended by thousands of his followers in the coastal city of Misrata, 210 kilometres east of Tripoli.

A former governor of the Libyan central bank, who was at the rally, told Reuters: "Yes, this means privatisation and that Libyans will be enabled to own these companies' shares."

Col. Qadhafi said the firms to be privatised would include the giant Libyan Company for Iron and Steel based at Misrata, the country's cement works, vehicle assembly plants and manu-

facturers of furniture.

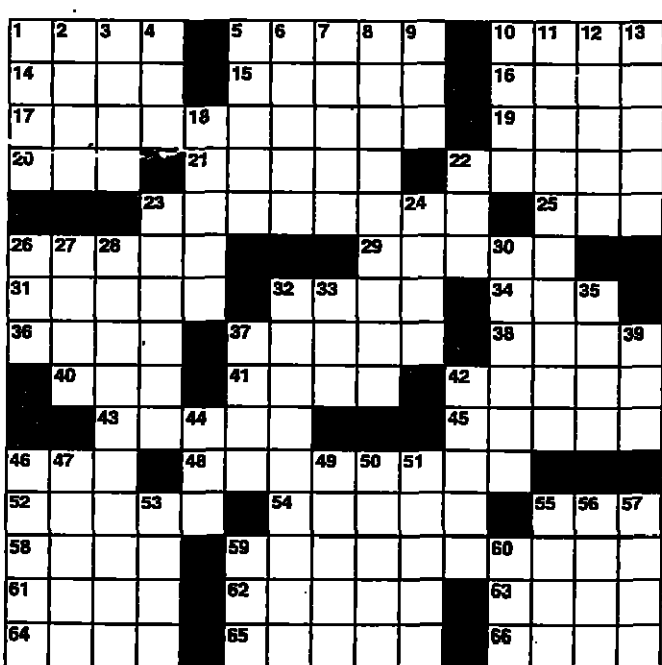
He added that the move would enable better management of the firms and improve their production.

Misrata's iron and steel plant has a production capacity of 1.3 million tonnes of liquid steel. It was constructed by several foreign firms including Germany's Krupp Hoesch Stahl A.G., Austria's Voest-Alpine, Kobe Steel Ltd. of Japan, Hyundai Corp. of Korea and Italy's Techint.

It started production in 1988 and uses the country's cheap gas resources for power generation.

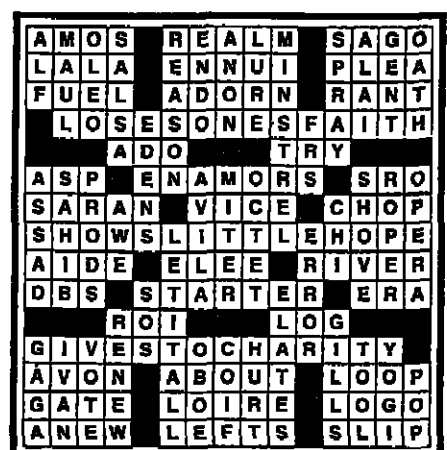
THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS**
- Computer picture
 - Did office work
 - Fireplace wood
 - Pedestal part
 - Cat—tails
 - Eye part
 - Excessive withdrawals
 - State: abbr.
 - Meadow
 - Colder
 - King of Judea
 - Superintends
 - Crested bird
 - Range
 - Untrue
 - Flutter
 - Diving bird
 - Voice vote
 - Ripening factor
 - Roman emperor
 - Jot
 - California fort
 - Teatimes: abbr.
 - Drink noisily
 - Way to go
 - One with bad luck
 - Lanka
 - Nisan
 - celebration
 - Mythological king
 - Anchor position
 - River of England
 - Skip
 - Wore out a welcome
 - Clark— (Superman)
 - Certain church calendar day
 - Hackman monogram
 - Restless
 - Ringlet
 - "Unto us — is given"



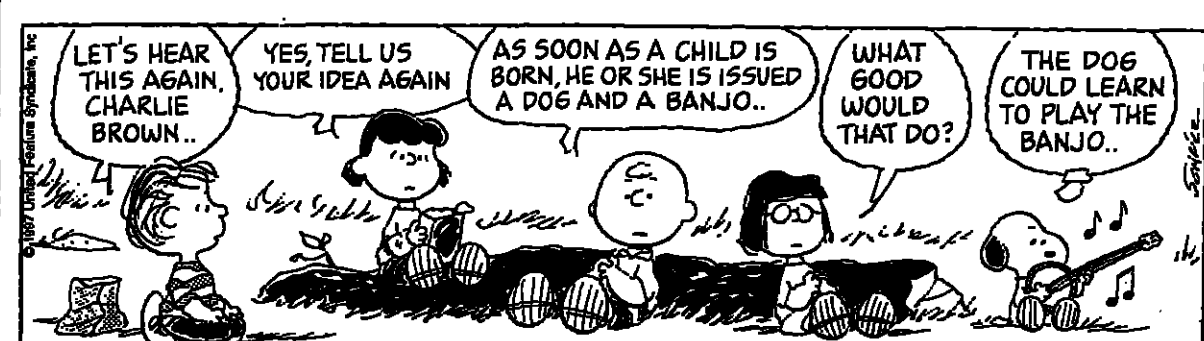
by Melvin Kenworthy

- DOWN**
- Graven image
 - Grotto
 - Concert halls
 - And not
 - Compel
 - "... bombs bursting —"
 - "... but a walking shadow"
 - Confidentially
 - Moines
 - Stringed instrument
 - Ecstatic
 - Italian city
 - Like beaches
 - Louganis, e.g.
 - Presidential monogram
 - Strain
 - Long times
 - Na Na
 - 27 African land
 - Nutifying
 - Tar
 - Helper in a crisis
 - Baseball's Mel
 - Raison d'—
 - So long
 - Cal. abbr.
 - Slumbered
 - High times
 - Cigarette
 - Covered with hoarfrost
 - Metric measure
 - Fragrant rootstock
 - Travelers' needs
 - Lawyer: abbr.
 - Inspects
 - Strange: pref.
 - First place
 - Frequently, to poets
 - Turkish leader



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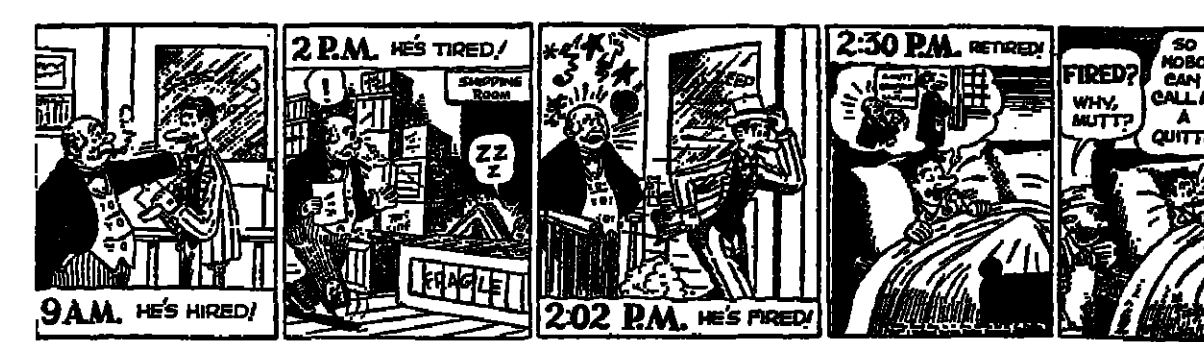
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



Indian trade delegation clinches JD10m deals with Jordanian firms

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Last week's Indo-Jordan Trade Promotion Week was considered great success as JD10 million trade deals were clinched between Jordanian

cattle feed companies and a visiting Indian trade delegation, an Indian embassy official told the Jordan Times.

The Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) met with approximately 60 Jordanian cattle feed manu-

facturers in a buyer/seller meeting in cooperation with the Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce last Wednesday.

"The meeting ended on an optimistic note. We hope cattle feed imports to Jordan will rise to \$25 million in 1997," Sanjay Panda, the Indian Embassy Charge d'Affaires said Monday.

India's biggest export to Jordan is soybean meal, the main ingredient in chicken and cattle feed, which produced a revenue of \$18.6 million in 1995.

In the non-oil category, Jordan is the number one exporter to India, exporting an annual \$90 million worth of phosphates, Mr. Panda asserted.

Jordan is the world's fifth largest producer and third largest exporter of rock phosphates.

The announcement by the Indo-Jordan Chemicals Company last Thursday that their first shipment of phosphoric acid will head for India by mid-April, two months ahead of schedule, brought optimism to the participants in the trade promotion week.

"This \$170 million Indo-Jordan joint venture is proving a real success. It will hopefully pave the way for many more such ventures," Mr. Panda said.

Mr. Panda affirmed that last week's meetings "proved fruitful as maximum interaction occurred with participating Jordanian businessmen."

Embassy officials expressed satisfaction that the Jordanian business community was made aware on how to go about conducting mutual business deals with India.

"We can now explore different possibilities on how to increase bilateral cooperation," said Mr. Panda.

Assistant Secretary General Mohammad Bani-Hani represented the Ministry of Industry and Trade at the final meeting last Thursday. He said: "Although the trade balance is in favour of Jordan, we would like to see a positive increase in bilateral trade."

Other focuses during the week included the promotion of engineering tools, bulk drugs, and discussions of Indian cooperation on future railroad projects in Jordan.

Projected bilateral trade figures for 1997 are expected to reach the \$300 million mark with the commissioning of the joint Indo-Jordan Chemical Company.

Foreigners leading Israeli stock market

TEL AVIV (R) — Foreign investors have taken up the reins of the Israeli stock market, now in its fourth month, but the small domestic players are still looking on, analysts have said.

"The consensus is that foreigners missed the first wave (of the rally)...and they decided to take part in this one," said Jonathan Ross, a vice president at Nesuah Trading and Investments.

Since early November the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange's Mishkanim index of top 100 stocks has risen by more than 40 per cent as trading volume has more than tripled.

Nadine Baudot-Trautenberg, head of international securities marketing at Bank Hapoalim, said provident funds had driven

the first phase of the rally but since January foreign investors have been leading the market higher.

She estimated overseas investors accounted for 20 per cent of market volume in January, compared with four to five per cent during 1996.

But analysts said the broad investing public has yet to move money into the market. "The mutual funds have not been able to convince the small investor to come into the market," said Ms. Baudot-Trautenberg.

She attributed the problem to the funds' poor performance in recent years as well as the new investment advisory law. The law requires the banks, which are the biggest fund managers, to offer clients

advice on all funds, not just their own.

She said the banks would adjust, but predicted small investors would not become a factor in the market until later this year.

Michael Harris, vice president for emerging markets research at Merrill Lynch, said he was unconcerned by the absence of small investors.

"It's nice if the rally isn't based on retail funds, which have often not been thought of," he said. The potential flush of retail funds later on gives the market more upside, he said.

Market watchers say it was interest rates that finally turned around the market in November after a three-year slump.

"The general economic

environment changed starting in September, with people feeling that interest rates were gradually falling," said Ms. Baudot-Trautenberg.

Rates peaked last June when the Bank of Israel raised the base rate to 17 per cent. Rates have since come down to 14.2 per cent, although they trail the parallel fall in inflation.

But for overseas investors the signing of an agreement on redeployment from the West Bank town of Hebron in January was a crossroad.

"There was no single concrete sign that the government was committed to the peace process (prior to the agreement)," said Merrill Lynch's Harris. "It was a reassuring sign."

He added that all coun-

tries in the "emerging European markets" category have been enjoying an influx of foreign liquidity.

The rally has been so muscle-bound that it has failed to correct as widely expected. Mr. Ross warned that one of the reasons for the market's unstoppable rise is the lack of liquidity, especially for foreigners.

Mr. Ross noted that overall market capitalisation is just over \$40 billion and that some two thirds of that is in the hands of controlling shareholders.

He said Israeli shares still have upside potential but added that he sees the consolidation level of the MAOF index of blue chips at 265-275 points.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

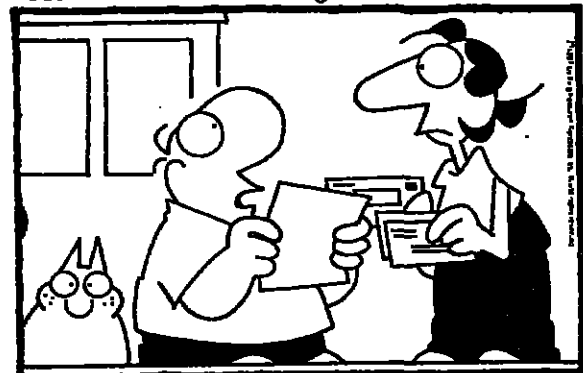
Ten British trade missions to visit Jordan this year

TEN BRITISH trade missions will visit Jordan this year, Britain's ambassador to the Kingdom told Al Ra'i. Ambassador Peter Hinchcliffe indicated that this intensive activity by the British private sector reflects Britain's increased interest in the Jordanian economy compared to previous years. "No missions have been organised before six years," the ambassador pointed out. Mr. Hinchcliffe said the first mission will begin a four-day visit starting March 15. The mission, which will be headed by Michael Brosh from the Nottingham Chamber of Industry and Trade, will comprise 13 representatives of industrial and service companies that cover engineering, energy and chemical sectors in addition to specifications and standards and ISO. The mission will visit the Jordanian Chambers of Industry and Trade and a number of factories at the Sahab Industrial City. In addition the members of the mission will contact their counterparts here to discuss the opportunities and possibilities of establishing joint projects and to clinch contracts and deals as well as find agents to represent the British firms in the country. Trade between Jordan and Britain has increased last year as British exports to Jordan rose by 17 per cent to £185 million while British imports from Jordan reached £28 million, a 15 per cent increase over the figure in 1995. Furthermore, a British company will organise an international exhibition in Amman in May. The exhibition, which will focus on the construction sector, is expected to attract participation from international firms (Al Ra'i).

Decision to free prices of produce postponed until time is right

AS THE present conditions are not suitable, the government has decided to postpone a decision on freeing prices of fruits and vegetables until further notice. Supply Minister Muir Sobar explained that weather conditions and frost have caused damage to agricultural products and, as such, prices have risen due to low supply. The minister did not specify any date for a decision but emphasised that the government will be taking the step at a later date when the conditions will be right with ample supplies of produce at stable prices. The Ministry has previously announced that a decision on freeing produce prices would be taken by the end of February or in early March. Asked about freeing the prices on 26 foodstuffs still being fixed by the ministry, Mr. Sobar pointed out that such a step is linked to implementing the anti-monopoly law and other laws, still being debated in Parliament, to ensure effective controls and to protect the consumers. Mr. Sobar concluded by saying that his ministry will not be cancelled overnight as there are many measures that should be taken before reaching this target which he expected will be attained within three years (Al Ra'i).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I thought we picked a phone company that charges ten cents a minute, but it's actually ten cents a word."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOWNK

GUCOH

NAHDE

TARIPE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: IN THE

Jumbles: HUSKY ICING BAZAAR PICKET
Answer: What the bragging optimist let his patient with - "T STRAIN"

Czech Republic interested to buy Jordanian produce

AMMAN (Petra) — The Czech Republic is interested in importing Jordanian vegetables and fruits, especially during the winter season, and hopes that fresh agricultural products will reach the Czech markets starting in November this year, the head of a visiting Czech delegation said Monday.

Speaking at a meeting with Agriculture Minister Mustafa Shneikat a spokesman for the delegation said that as of November, the Czech Airlines will commence direct flights between Amman and Prague and this arrangement could be useful in facilitating the Jordanian agricultural exports to the Czech Republic's markets.

During the meeting, the delegation discussed prospects for cooperation between Jordan and the Czech Republic in developing equipment used in irrigation, and in refrigerating and freezing fruits and vegetables.

Dr. Shneikat said Jordan welcomes trade exchanges with the Czech Republic and is ready to export to its markets high quality and fresh agricultural products, especially during the winter season, at very competitive prices.

Jordan produces most of its crops in the Jordan Valley which enjoys warm climate in winter and which yields products earlier than other countries in the region.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANISED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 03/03/1997											
FAST	12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW				TRANS.	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE		
1	267.50	205.000	ARAB BANK	14.7	1.30	11	340	91390	267.50	268.25	+.75*
2	2.100	1.900	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	39	15259	29465	1.96	1.97	-.03*
3	1.650	2.900	BANK OF JORDAN	11.4	0.00	1	1000	3160	3.16	3.16	-
4	5.200	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.4	2.97	4	1616	7498	4.65	4.65	-
5	2.950	2.440	JOR. KOWAT BANK	19.8	0.00	1	79	215	2.73	2.74	+.01*
6	1.090	840	JOR. GULF BANK	8.1	6.24	11	13450	11425	85	85	-
7	4.120	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.4	0.00	14	1850	7108	3.91	3.84	-.07*
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 201.78	CHNG: +0.07	82	33594	150260				
8	2.800	1.630	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	10.64	4	574	1078	1.90	1.88	-.02*
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 119.33	CHNG: -0.11	4	574	1078				
9	1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.5	7.23	10	1364	2255	1.66	1.66	-
10	2.700	2.340	HINER MINERALS	13.0	5.38	1	300	795	2.63	2.65	+.02*
11	1.540	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	23	16470	19291	1.17	1.17	-
12	1.050	820	REAL ESTATE INV.	21.3	3.88	2	75	72	.99	.96	-.03*
13	2.200	1.440	HID. EAST HOTELS	60.3	0.00	6	3300	4620	1.44	1.40	-.04*
14	3.720	3.130	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	13.3	6.93	7	5250	17755	3.40	3.37	-.03*
15	1.200	.780	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	2	500	300	.79	.78	-.01*
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 108.35	CHNG: -0.42	51	27259	45178				
16	3.730	3.050	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.4	2.94	11	5535	18823	3.42	3.40	-.02*
17	6.100	4.950	ARAB POTASH CO.	18.0	3.36	2	100	595	5.95	5.95	-
18	12.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.3	7.88	11	951	9650	10.15	10.15	-
19	3.500	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	34.8	0.00	1	300	777	2.61	2.59	-.02*
20	4.420	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	20.6	5.32	31	8400	11486	3.80	3.76	-.04*
21	5.650	4.000	JOR. ISLAMIC IND.	8.6	7.43	7	1700	11723	6.92	6.99	+.07*
22	2.400	2.050	JORDAN DAIRY	13.5	6.82	1	50	110	2.20	2.20	-
23	2.310	1.570	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	8.9	7.45	4	1020	1641	1.61	1.61	-
24	.960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	18	26000	14878	.59	.58	-.01*
25	1.020	.500	NATIONAL INDS.	9.6	6.23	1	250	151	.65	.65	-
26	1.540	.930	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	200	204	1.03	1.02	-.01*
27	1.670	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	28.3	0.00	2	1250	1880	1.51	1.51	-
28	2.800	1.440	UNIV. HOUS. INDS.	5.0	12.20	16	6200	10212	1.67	1.64	-.03*
29	1.820	1.140	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	16.7	0.00	41	16574	22052	1.35	1.33	-.02*
30	11.270	.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.4	0.00	14	5475	4928	.91	.90	-.01*
31	1.360	1.050	INTL. TOBACCO	27.5	0.00	18	10400	12250	1.20	1.17	-.03*
32	1.470	.930	UNION CR. & VES.	24.4	0.00	6	3800	3762	1.00	.99	-.01*
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 116.84	CHNG: -0.22	186	88205	145132				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 156.34	CHNG: -0.07	323	149632	341648				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 03/03/1997											
33	.690	.440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	19.3	0.00	1	100	48	.46	.48	+.02*
34	.790	.500	JOR. TRADE PAC.	13.6	0.00	12	11200	5722	.52	.51	-.01*
35	.880	.370	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	7	11200	4930	.49	.44	-.05*
36	.950	.400	AL-DAMLIYAN TST.	14.9	0.00	5	13668	5361	.67	.66	-.01*
37	.640	.210	JOR. TEL. MACH. JEMCO	9	0.00	11	14000	3350	.23	.24	+.01*
38	.690	.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	10	57300	26931	.47	.47	-
39	.820	.520	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	3	1100	563	.54	.53	-.01*
40	.850	.400	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	8	0.00	10	8000	6140	.47	.46	-.01*
41	.670	.430	KAYZAK DIES & MOULDS	8	0.00	5	5000	3100	.63	.62	-.01*
42	.990	.720	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.00	22	46975	35701	.75	.76	+.01*
43	.700	.430	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	9	0.00	2	2128	1084	.51	.51	-
44	.620	.350	HIDEST PHARM. TST.	8	0.00	4	2200	814	.62	.62	-
45	.770	.570	RAZI PHARM. 652	8	0.00	9	12000	2880	.59	.59	-
46	.680	.390	INDS. ENG.	26.5	0.00	4	5000	2195	.45	.43	-.02*
47	.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	8	0.00	1	250	175	.71	.70	-.01*
48	.950	.530	HID. EAST COMPLEX	7.9	0.00	5	3500	2315	.67	.67	-
GRAND TOTAL					113	194079	99372				
1: New 12 months high 2: New 12 months low 3: Listed during the past 12 months 4: P/E ratio is 100 or more 5: Negative P/E 6: Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Sampras wins

PHILADELPHIA (R) — For the second straight day, World No. 1 Pete Sampras scuffled through a three-set match — but won.

Sampras beat Patrick Rafter of Australia 5-7, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3 Sunday in the final of the \$714,250 Advanta Championships one day after a difficult tussle with Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands.

"Yesterday was really a struggle and a fight and today was even tougher," Sampras said after the two hour, 19 minute match. "Pat was serving and volleying harder than practically anybody I've seen play."

The \$110,000 victory for the top-seeded Sampras stretched his winning streak to 20 matches, including his ninth Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January.

His 17-0 record for 1997 is the best beginning to a season since Ivan Lendl posted a 25-0 start in 1986.

Philadelphia is an important stop for Pete Sampras, who has won here three times. He played his first pro tournament here in 1988 and won the first of 47 career titles here in 1990.

On the all-time list of tournament titles, Sampras is now tied in ninth place with Rod Laver.

Until he visibly tired in the third set, the 60th-ranked Rafter came dangerously close to becoming the only player ranked outside the top 20 to beat Sampras in a final.

But in the end Sampras showed why he is superior: he knows how to dig deep and pressure an opponent at the vital moments.

"The way Pete plays, he cruises for a while and when he needs to pick up the pace, he does," Rafter said.

Rafter, who had wrist surgery in October of 1995, played only two tournaments

between the operation and April 1996.

After this week, Rafter, who earned \$57,900 as runner-up, will move up in the rankings to the lower 40s.

Rafter, who has been receiving acupuncture for his right elbow this week, once ranked as high as 20th in the world in August of 1994.

"Just to get close to being competitive is a thrill for me," said Rafter after the match. "It's been a while since I've been competitive with the top guys."

After breaking Sampras's serve in the third game, Rafter was serving for the first set at 5-4. Sampras held Rafter off temporarily by breaking back in the tenth game.

But Rafter, who tested Sampras's backhand throughout the first set, was too powerful and won the final two games of the first set.

In the second set, there were no service breaks. The tiebreaker was a tight contest until Sampras won the final four points.

Rafter looked poised to score his second career victory in five matches played against Sampras when he took a 2-0 lead in the third set.

But Sampras rallied back in the next game by taking advantage of his third break point with a crunching overhead smash.

That game unravelled Rafter, who saved two break points to bring the score to deuce but could not hold his serve.

"That game was the key to the match," Sampras said. "We had that really long point for deuce and I saw him feel it. He was winded. It changed the momentum of the match."

Rafter also lost his serve in the seventh and ninth games of the final set.

Dettori says Helissio the horse to beat in Dubai

DUBAI (R) — With the \$2.4 million winner's stake of this month's Dubai World Cup looming tantalizingly, Frankie Dettori says France's Helissio will be the horse to beat.

"As far as quality and what they achieved last year, I guess Helissio is probably the best horse in Europe now and, if he handles the dirt, is the one everyone's got to beat," he told a news conference ahead of the March 29 race.

The colourful Italian jock-

ey, sporting a tie as bright as some of the racing silks he wears on tracks around the world, fully intends to better his dismal last-place performance aboard local favourite Halling at last year's inaugural event.

"One way to look at last year is we can only do better. I was a little bit upset because I felt my horse was a champion and it was a shame he had to finish like that," he said.

Helissio is the best-rated Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe

winner in years but was beaten into third place by a nose in the Japan Cup in November.

American wonder horse Cigar, who has since been retired, won the 1996 inaugural running of the mile-and-a-quarter Dubai race, the world's richest.

Dettori said he did not yet know which horse he would ride in the \$4 million race, adding that he usually left the decision to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, crown prince of Dubai and the world's most successful owner-breeder.

"As far as I'm concerned I won't know until the day before. It is a very important race but we have so many good horses in the race, I'm sure whatever I'm going to ride it is going to have a first chance," he said.

Dettori also said he had put the Haydock Park affair, in which Britain's jockey club found him in breach of the rules for refusing to ride at Haydock Park on October 16, firmly behind him.

"As far as I am concerned, it was back to work the next day. It's all behind and past us now, so let's get on and get to work," he said.

Racing's ruling body in Britain decided to take no action against him despite the breach and exonerated 20 other jockeys who failed to continue racing on what they considered dangerously heavy ground at the British track.

"We didn't strike, we didn't boycott. Basically it was a little bit of a lack of communication between the stewards and jockeys...I always said I wasn't prepared to ride. It was very clear the stewards didn't carry out the procedures properly," Dettori added.

The jockey said he thought it would be hard to beat his unprecedented feat of seven winners from seven mounts at Ascot last September.

"Racing has been going for 280 years and six out of six horses has happened four times. It's not very usual to have seven races."



Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Ramon Martinez from Dominican Republic, pitches as he faces the New York Mets, during spring training action at Holman Stadium in Vero Beach, Florida. Martinez was 15-6 last year for the club (Reuters photo)



Los Angeles Dodgers centrefielder Brett Butler is tagged out at home by New York Mets catcher Alberto Castillo (L) during spring training action at Holman Stadium in Vero Beach, Florida. Mets right fielder Alex Ochoa threw out Butler after Mets third baseman Butch Huskey overthrew first base on a ground ball by the Dodgers' Chad Fonville. Butler is continuing his comeback following cancer surgery in 1996 (Reuters photo)

Depleted Newcastle turn to Ginola

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Frenchman David Ginola is set to face his fellow countrymen Tuesday when Newcastle play Monaco in the UEFA Cup quarterfinals with £30 million worth of strikers on the sidelines.

Ginola has been linked with a return to his former club Paris St. Germain after being out of favour at Newcastle since Kenny Dalglish succeeded Kevin Keegan as manager in January.

But the flamboyant winger will almost certainly be recalled for the first leg clash at St. James's Park against the French League leaders with Dalglish facing a major selection crisis.

The five leading strikers in Newcastle's squad two months ago are all unavailable with two injured, one suspended and two transferred to Premiership rivals.

England captain Alan Shearer, the world's most expensive player at £15 mil-

lion (about \$24 million), has been sidelined by his third groin operation in 10 months.

He has been joined on the casualty list by his international colleague Les Ferdinand, a six million pound buy from QPR 18 months ago, who pulled a hamstring in Saturday's 1-0 home defeat to struggling Southampton.

Newcastle are also without eight million pound Colombian ace Faustino Asprilla, who is suspended after being booked in Newcastle's 2-0 win over French side Metz in the last round.

The former Parma striker was shown the yellow card for waving an uprooted corner flag with his shirt hanging off it in celebration of scoring his second goal.

Nor can Dalglish call on former star reserves Paul Kitson and Darren Huckerby, who have been sold to West Ham and

Coventry respectively.

If Ferdinand is ruled out, 36-year-old Peter Beardsley will be the only recognised striker available and he is likely to be joined in attack by utility player Steve Watson, who has only limited experience of playing upfront.

Dalglish is pessimistic about Ferdinand's chances of facing the Frenchmen, saying: "It doesn't look too promising for Tuesday night."

But Southampton's Matt Le Tissier, who scored the goal that consigned Newcastle to their first league defeat under Dalglish, believes a patchwork team could still beat Monaco.

"They're going to struggle for forwards but you often find that when clubs are in adversity like that they come out and play really well. I certainly wouldn't write them off," says England star Le Tissier.

European Soccer Juventus ready for glory dash

PARIS (AFP) — European champions Juventus, with a seven points lead over Inter Milan, appeared to have one hand firmly on the Italian League title Sunday, after rivals Sampdoria crashed to a 1-2 home defeat against Bologna.

Russian striker Igor Kolyanov scored twice in the second-half for Bologna who surged back after going behind to a 23rd minute effort from Vincenzo Montella.

Juventus had beaten Italian Cup finalists Vicenza 2-0 24 hours earlier and, with 44 points from 22 games, they now lead Roy Hodgson's Inter Milan and a rejuvenated Parma, who are both on 37 points.

Sampdoria's loss saw them slip from second to fourth place on 36 points.

England's Paul Ince scored twice as Inter beat Piacenza 3-0 on Saturday night, while Parma's fine run continued with a 3-2 win over relegation strugglers Cagliari.

French defender Lilian Thuram notched his first goal in Italy since arriving this season from Monaco, while 21-year-old Argentine striker Hernan Crespo added the other two.

Crespo, who has struggled all season after a sparkling appearance in the Olympic soccer tournament at the Atlanta Games, knocked in the second from close range and added the third with a superb overhead kick. Sandro Tovalieri scored twice towards the end for Cagliari, while Enrico Chiesa missed a late penalty for Parma.

AC Milan drew 1-1 with as Roma at San Siro, with ever-green Pietro Vierchowod, who turns 38 next month, opening the scoring in the 65th minute — stooping to head home Roberto Baggio's free-kick.

In Spain, former England manager Bobby Robson came under increasing pressure from frustrated fans to resign when his Barcelona side crashed to a shock 4-0 defeat at Tenerife.

Although Barcelona are second in the league, Robson has already been disowned by many of the club's faithful who never accepted the sacking of former supremo Johan Cruyff.

Barcelona's latest defeat means that their bitter rivals Real Madrid will increase their lead at the top of the table to nine points if they win their away match at Espanyol on Monday. Barcelona have 53 points from 27 matches while Real Madrid, with a game in hand, have 59.

In other matches, Atletico Madrid snatched a home victory in a five-goal thriller over Sevilla, while Deportivo came away 2-1 winners from Rayo Vallecano.

Valencia were beaten 2-1 at Logrones while Real Sociedad and Athletic Bilbao played out a 0-0 draw.

First Division giants Paris St. Germain and Strasbourg crashed out of the French Cup on Saturday when they were beaten by the "part-timers" of Clermont Ferrand and Creteil.

Paris St. Germain's recent nightmare run of poor results continued when they let slip a 4-1 lead with just 20 minutes left to play against fourth division minnows Clermont at the home side's tiny Gabriel-Montpied stadium.

Clermont surged back to make it 4-4 and then, after a goalless extra-time, won the penalty shoot out.

Benoit Caquet opened the scoring for PSG after just 13 minutes when the Clermont defenders failed to clear a Vincent Guerin corner.

Brazilian striker Dely Valdes made it 2-0 for the visitors after 25 minutes when he slotted home from close range after the Clermont keeper Enjolras failed to hold a sizzling drive from Patrice Loko.

Clermont came back into the match seven minutes into the second-half when Bessaque scored from the penalty spot after N'Gotty had brought down Chastang. But PSG went clear again on the hour through Rai and then Loko looked to have put the issue beyond doubt when he made it 4-1 in the 70th minute.

The first division giants were then rocked back on their heels as Chastang, and Belfec scored for the home side and N'Gotty put into his own net.

In the penalty series Clermont made no mistakes whereas Enjolras saved from both Paul Le Guen and Guerin.

The night's other shock was meted out by third division Creteil who defeated Strasbourg 1-0 thanks to a goal on half-time from Kharchaoui.

The defeats followed hard on the heels of the surprise elimination of last season's champions and Cup winners Auxerre on Friday. Auxerre went out 1-0 to second division Troyes.

In other matches, Bordeaux beat fellow first division Cannes 1-0 and Nice scored twice in the last five minutes to put out second division Gueugnon.

Guingamp defeated Caen 1-0, Laval won the all-second division clash against Niort by the same scoreline and Lille were beaten 3-0 at home by Montpellier.

Bayern Munich retained their three-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga by thrashing MSV Duisburg 5-2 as closest rivals Borussia Dortmund saw off 1860 Munich 4-1 to keep in the title hunt.

"Super" Mario Basler gave Bayern the perfect start by scoring on three minutes and Jürgen Klinsmann blasted a second, his ninth of the season, after 26 minutes to make the result a formality even before the break.

For Basler, who set up Klinsmann's goal, the result made up for a poor week in which he was castigated by German coach Berti Vogts for a sub-standard performance against Israel. He was also hit by a 10,000-mark fine for criticising Bayern boss Giovanni Trapattoni.

Even so, Basler did blot his copybook somewhat when Duisburg's Norwegian keeper Thomas Gill parried his second half penalty.

Third-placed Bayer Leverkusen squandered two points as they were held to a goalless draw in Dusseldorf, while Stuttgart drew 2-2 at Werder Bremen.

Cologne moved into the top five after a late Holger Gassmaier goal saw off rock-bottom Freiburg. And Karlsruhe captain Thomas Haessler returned from three months out with an ankle injury to save a 1-1 draw against relegation-threatened Borussia Moenchengladbach, who went ahead with a goal by Polish import Andrzej Juskowiak.

Unfancied Arminia Bielefeld continued their march up the table with a 3-2 win over VFL Bochum.

GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
A TARIK HIRSH

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAS CAKQ654 OAJ53 4Q

The bidding has proceeded:

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

Pass Pass 4 4 7

What do you bid now?

A. - The high-level preempt has achieved its purpose — you are groping in the dark. Your hand is too strong for a bid of five hearts. Yet if you double, more than likely you will play there and the penalty could be woefully inadequate. A possible compromise would be to bid four no trump now, then correct to five hearts over partner's take-out. Anything could be right!

Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AS QJS CA9864 AAKQ72

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1 1 2 1 4 3 2

What action do you take?

A. - You have bid partner that you have nine or more cards in the minor suits, and might possibly have no spades at all. Nevertheless, partner has persisted in spades. Trust him. Pass.

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAQ44 2AQ9 0843 465

Partner opens the bidding with two no trump. What do you bid now?

A. - You certainly are going to play in slam, so we don't blame you if bid six no trump right away. In light of your ruffing value in clubs, however, the hand might play better in a suit contract. We would bid three clubs — the Stayman Convention — to check on a possible 4-4 spade

fit before committing the hand to no trump.

Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AK9 0K32 JAK1084 AKJ7

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with a weak two spades. What action do you take?

A. - When electing to act over a weak two-bid, treat it much like a normal bid. If the opening bid had been one in the suit, after a one spade bid, you would have overcalled one no trump, so bid two no trump now.

Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKQ732 0Q632 06 AKQ10

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1 1 2 1 4 3 2

What do you bid now?

A. - One of the reasons you opened this scorching wonder is because you held both major suits. Don't bid three no trump now with your singleton in partner's suit. Continue the description of your hand by rebidding three hearts.

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AKJ84 0KJ63 0V4d AAK888

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1 1 2 1 4 3 2

What action do you take?

A. - With only 15 high-card points and a void in partner's suit, where would you like to go? If partner could do no more than take a simple preference back to clubs, pass before you get too high. Partner might not stop if you bid again.

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Egypt's Ahli win Arab Champions Cup

Faisali hold Khreibkeh to goalless draw to finish 3rd

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

EGYPT'S AL AHLI beat Morocco's Al Raja 2-0 in the final minutes of the match to win the 3rd Arab Champions Cup which concluded in Casablanca, Morocco Monday.

In an earlier match, Jordan's Al Faisali held Morocco's Khreibkeh to a goalless draw to finish third in the elite competition grouping the Arab World's top four teams.

Al Faisali's participation made Jordanian soccer history as they became the first of the Kingdom's teams to participate in the event which aims at naming the best Arab team. The competitors were the top two teams of the Cup Winners Cup and League Champions.

Al Faisali lost the chance to secure a more advanced standing when they failed to convert two last minute chances as one shot cleared the goal while the other hit the post.

The Ahli-Raja match also looked destined to end in a goalless draw which would have given Khreibkeh the title. However, Al Ahli delighted fans when Samir Kammoun converted a free kick to score the first goal in the 43rd minute of the second half.

The second goal came after Hadi Khashabeh was tackled in the zone and scored from a penalty kick in the fifth minute of extra time.

Following the matches, HRH Prince

Abdullah Ben Al Hussein joined Arab Soccer Federation President Prince Faisal Ben Fahd in distributing awards and medals.

Al Ahli became the third team to lift the championship trophy after Saudi Arabia's Al Shabab took the first and Tunisia's Al Taraji took the second.

Al Faisali's Mohammad Mahadin received the best player award, Al Ahli's Hadi Khashabeh the top scorer. Al Ahli were also named the ideal team.

Champions Al Ahli received the winners' check of \$50,000. Khreibkeh got \$25,000, Al Faisali \$15,000 and Al Raja \$10,000.

Al Faisali had qualified to the championship after finishing runner up to Khreibkeh in the Arab Cup Winners Cup last summer.

In the competition's opening match they went down 4-0 to eventual champions Al Ahli but beat Moroccan champions and league-leaders al Raja 2-1 in the second match.

Al Faisali's 29-member delegation includes players: Anis Shafiq, Walid Abu Hmeid, Freidon Saeed, Mohannad Mahadin, Ahmad Khalil, Firas Khalaleh, Ali Zu'bi, Ihab Nasr, Rami Abu Fanar, Osama Talal, Rabeah Awad, Ziyad Abu Shanab, Jamal Abu Abed, Subhi Suleiman, Hassuneh Sheikh, Hatem Aqel, Haitham Shbouh, Jiryes Tador, Mahmoud Matar, Ja far Hammad, Mansour Tawiah, Raed Jbaur.

FINAL STANDINGS

Team	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Ahli	2	1	1	8	3	6
Khreibkeh	1	2	-	3	2	5
Faisali	1	1	1	2	5	4
Raja	-	1	2	1	4	1

Payton leads Sonics to victory as Suns, Nuggets win in OT

ORLANDO (R) — Gary Payton scored a season-high 32 points, including a clutch three-pointer with 58 seconds to go, as the Seattle SuperSonics beat the Orlando Magic 109-101 Sunday to top off a successful road trip.

Payton shot 12-of-20 from the field and had seven assists.

"I'm so impressed with what this guy does," said teammate Nate McMillan. "He's playing, I think, MVP basketball, and from the guard position. He's defending, coming up with huge plays. The last few nights, he's been doing something Michael Jordan would do. When a team needs something, he does it."

Shawn Kemp had 17 points and nine rebounds for Seattle, which went 4-1 away from home, having won in Utah and Cleveland, lost in Indiana and knocked off Miami and Orlando. The last two wins came without All-Star forward Detlef Schrempf, who was sidelined with a foot injury.

"We finished off a road trip going in with a lot of teams that could beat us," Sonics coach George Karl said. "We've come out with four wins and this win tonight made it a very special trip for us. We can kind of roll this into a good momentum."

Seattle's ninth win in 10 games was the first setback in seven games for new Orlando coach Richie Adubato.

In Denver, Antonio McDyess's follow shot with four-tenths of a second left in overtime gave the Nuggets a 109-107 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers, who had their four-game winning streak snapped.

McDyess finished with 33 points for the Nuggets, which tied a franchise record with its third straight overtime game and snapped a six-game losing streak.

Laphonso Ellis added 29 points, including a pair of free throws with 21 seconds left in regulation to

force the game into overtime, as well as 11 rebounds.

At Detroit, Grant Hill 23 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds as the Pistons won for the ninth time in their last 10 games. 82-75 over the Atlanta Hawks.

Joe Dumars had 22 points for the Pistons, who held Atlanta to one field goal over an 11-minute span in the second half.

Christian Laettner recorded 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Hawks, who had their three-game winning streak snapped.

In Indiana, Mark Jackson had a triple-double and Reggie Miller scored 27 points as the Pacers pulled away for a 101-85 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Jackson, who set a club record with 19 assists Thursday, posted 17 points, 15 assists and 10 rebounds in his 13th career triple-double, his third of the season.

Eddie Jones scored 28 points and Elden Campbell added 17 for Los Angeles, which has lost three of four games on its five-game road trip and is struggling without injured All-Star center Shaquille O'Neal.

In Miami, P.J. Brown had 16 points and 11 rebounds and Isaac Austin added 15 and a career-high 15 boards as the Heat defeated the San Antonio Spurs 79-72 to set a single-season franchise record for wins.

Miami (43-16) clung to its half-game lead over the Knicks in the Atlantic Division with the win after back-to-back losses without injured centre Alonzo Mourning.

The Spurs' Dominique Wilkins, who sprained a hamstring Friday, is sidelined indefinitely.

In New York, Allan Houston scored 28 points as the Knicks won their sixth straight home game, 90-82 over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Patrick Ewing had 18 points and 12 rebounds for

New York, which won for the 11th time in 13 games. The Knicks were back at Madison Square Garden after a six-game road trip.

Bobby Phillips scored 24 points for Cleveland, which lost for just the third time in 10 contests.

In Dallas, Wayman Tisdale's layup at the buzzer capped a comeback from a 27-point deficit as the Phoenix Suns took advantage of the worst collapse in Mavericks history for a 109-108 overtime victory.

Led by former Mavericks point guard Jason Kidd, the Suns rallied from 85-58 with 2:57 left in the third quarter. Kidd, greeted by loud boos in his return to Dallas, sank three three-pointers during a 36-9 run.

On the final possession, Kidd drove the lane and passed to Tisdale, who was flashing along the right baseline and put in a bank shot as time expired.

Kidd scored 23 points and Kevin Johnson added 22. Former Sun Michael Finley led Dallas with 24 points.

In Vancouver, Bryon Russell scored 20 points and Karl Malone had 18 points and nine rebounds as the Utah Jazz remained unbeaten against the Grizzlies with a 93-86 victory.

The Jazz have won 10 of their last 12 games and are 7-0 all-time against the Grizzlies.

In Minnesota, Glen Rice had 39 points, Anthony Mason contributed 15 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists and Mugsy Bogues added 14 points and 12 assists as the Charlotte Hornets beat the Timberwolves 108-96.

In Portland, Kenny Anderson scored 20 points and Isaiah Rider 19 as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Philadelphia 76ers 112-95.

U.S. crash, Spain lose 5-0 as Fed Cup shocks abound

PARIS (AFP) — Martina Navratilova's first match as American Fed Cup captain ended in disaster in Holland on Sunday when the defending champions were beaten 3-2 in the first round of the 1996 competition by the Netherlands.

And the elimination of the titleholders was not the only shock in the World Group one matches.

Spain, winners of the trophy in 1991, 1993, 1994 and 1995, were humiliated 5-0 away to Belgium while Germany, who were without their injured stars Steffi Graf and Anke Huber, crashed 3-2 to the Czech Republic.

Unlike Navratilova, Yannick Noah's first match as French team captain was a resounding success with the visitors defeating Japan 4-1 in Tokyo.

The Netherlands, who had got off to an excellent start on Saturday when Miriam Oremans defeated 15th-ranked Mary Joe Fernandez for the loss of just five games, capped a remarkable performance by winning both of Sunday's singles.

Oremans again produced the major surprise when she crushed Chanda Rubin, who has been in excellent form in recent weeks after her injury-disrupted 1996 season, in straight-sets.

Rubin, who won her opening singles on Saturday against powerful Brenda McCarthy-Schultz, had little left to offer against Oremans and went down 3-6, 0-6 on Sunday.

Meanwhile the big-serving Schultz-McCarthy beat Fernandez 1-6, 6-4, 9-7.

The only American victory on Sunday came in the doubles where Gigi Fernandez and Kimberly Po beat Schultz-McCarthy and Manon Bollegraf 6-3, 6-2.

The defeat was a bitter pill to swallow for Martina Navratilova, who, as a player, was never beaten in the competition.

The 40-year-old former world number-one was victorious in all nine matches she played for the former Czechoslovakia, and she went on to win all 28 matches she played for the United States.

Belgium, unable to field a full-strength team because of a late



Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States returns the ball to Dutch Brenda Schultz during their Federation Cup match. Fernandez lost her match in three sets 1-6 6-4 and 9-7 (Reuters photo)

injury to Dominique Monami-Van Roost, completed a humiliating triumph over Spain and left former world number-one Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario pondering her future.

Sanchez-Vicario, winner of three Grand Slam singles titles and now being coached by brother Emilio, is clearly lacking confidence, and she followed up her first-day loss to Els Callens by crashing in three sets to Sabine Appelmans on Sunday.

Belgian jubilation continued when Callens beat Maria Luisa Serna, called up for singles duty in the absence of injured former Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez, 6-1, 6-3.

Callens then joined forces with Nancy Feber to score a three-set win over gala Leon Garcia and Virginia Ruano-Pascual.

In Mannheim, the Czech Republic didn't need their top player Jana Novotna to complete a victory over Germany.

Ludmila Richterova and Adriana Gersi won their reverse singles clashes without dropping a set — Richterova seeing off



Dutch Miriam Oremans raises her fist as she celebrates her victory over Chanda Rubin of the United States. Oremans won her match in two sets 6-3 and 6-0 (Reuters photo)

exciting third set to defeat Naoko Sawamatsu 7-5, 4-6, 17-15.

Alexandra Fusai and Anne-Gaëlle Sidot then triumphed in the doubles by beating Naoko Kijimuta and Kyoko Nagatsuka 7-5, 6-4 in the world group two.

Switzerland's 16-year-old Martina Hingis played a major role in her country's 3-2 success against the Slovak Republic in Kosice. The world number-two won

both of her singles for the loss of just six games and also triumphed in the doubles alongside Putty Schnyder.

The Swiss now play Croatia who defeated Austria 4-1.

In the other half-of the Group Two draw, Australia will play Argentina. The Australians beat South Africa 3-2 in Durban while Argentina defeated Korea in Seoul 4-1.

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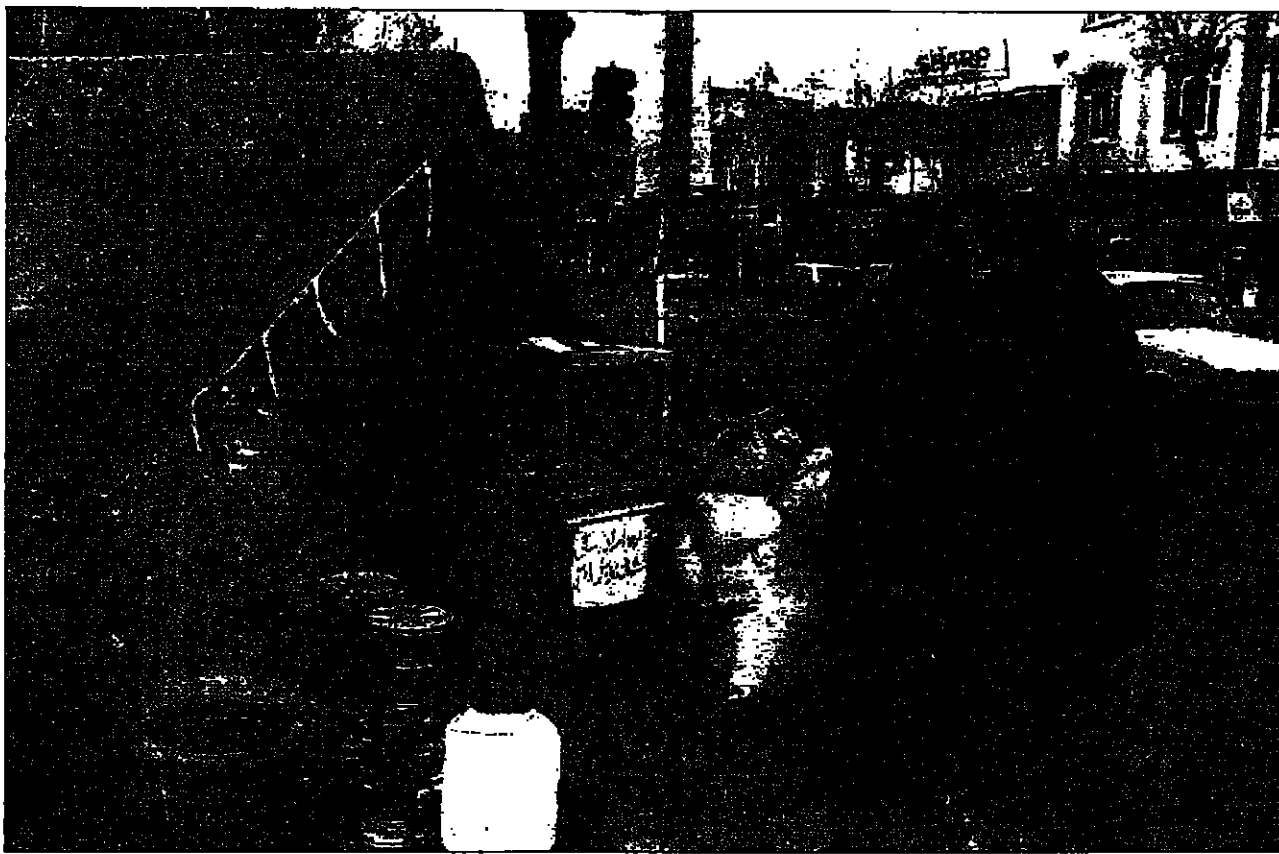
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Tents are set up at the main crossroads in the Iranian town of Ardabil to collect donations to assist the families made homeless by the earthquake in north-west Iran (AFP photo)

Iran quake toll rises to 965 — official

TEHRAN (AFP) — The death toll from an earthquake which rocked northwestern Iran soared to nearly 1,000 Monday as rescuers set up tents and distributed food and blankets to tens of thousands of people left homeless.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said Friday's quake which struck Ardabil province and Iranian Azerbaijan had killed 965 people and injured 2,600. The casualty toll had earlier been put at 600 dead and 2,500 injured.

Other reports said up to 3,000 were dead. Around 40,000 people lost their homes in the tremor, which was measured at 5.5 degrees on the open-ended Richter scale. Deputy Interior Minister Rassul Zargar told IRNA.

The quake destroyed or seriously damaged at least 110 villages and Iranian Radio said Monday that relief and rescue work was continuing in Ardabil near the Caspian Sea.

King sends condolences

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Monday sent a cable of condolences to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani on the death of Iranians in the recent earthquake. The King expressed sorrow over the loss of life and his wishes of speedy recovery for the injured.

King Hussein sent a similar cable of condolences to President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari of Pakistan, which was also hit by a quake.

Hundreds of aftershocks and heavy snow had "complicated" the rescue effort, the radio said, and another strong earthquake shook Ardabil province late Sunday, cutting off electricity to the area and causing further damage.

It said the quake, which registered 5.2 degrees on the Richter scale, was felt strongly in Ardabil and towns in the vicinity. The radio did not say if the latest quake had caused any casualties.

On Sunday afternoon, two aftershocks rattled Ardabil triggering panic among the population. Some 300 minor

houses.

He said on state television that tents did not provide much protection from the sub-zero temperatures, snow and strong winds in the area.

Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati spoke of the "depth of the tragedy," but said the government would use all its resources to rebuild the quake-hit region.

A United Nations source here said meanwhile that the U.N. office here sent a team to the area on Monday to assess the extent of the damage and casualties from the quake.

The source told AFP the world body would launch an appeal for international assistance for victims of the quake.

U.N. representatives would attend a meeting at the Foreign Ministry on Tuesday to discuss relief assistance for the victims, the source said. The officials are to prepare a list of items which could be provided by external donors.

Another 24 hours needed to identify Red Army suspects: Japanese envoy

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A Japanese special envoy said Monday that Japanese nationals arrested in Lebanon may be members of the Japanese Red Army but it will be another 24 hours before the authorities know for sure.

"We are still waiting for the final identification of these people by both Lebanese and Japanese judicial authorities," Hiroshi Hirabayashi said after a 40-minute meeting here with Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez.

"We have many elements which indicate that they may belong to the Japanese Red Army," which carried out a series of bloody attacks in the 1970s, he said.

"But to be able to say that clearly you have to wait may be 24 hours," he said. "We will be able to tell you in a very clear manner probably by tomorrow."

He refused to confirm the number of suspects arrested nearly two weeks ago or whether they included Kozo Okamoto, sentenced to life in prison in Israel for a 1972 attack on Tel Aviv's Lod Airport that killed 26 people.

Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said Monday he had sent a letter to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad for his help to clear up confusion over the reported arrest of Red Army suspects.

The letter was entrusted with Mr. Hirabayashi, who was visiting Beirut and scheduled to arrive in Damascus on Wednesday, Mr. Hashimoto added.

The premier also told reporters at his official residence that a meeting between Mr. Hirabayashi and Mr. Assad had not been arranged yet.

"I am not sure if it would be possible in terms of scheduling," he said. "But we'll see to it that such a meeting would not be discourteous."

Mr. Hashimoto said the letter contained his request that Syria cooperate with Lebanon in extraditing the detained Japanese if they were proven to be members of the Japanese Red Army.

"(The request) is included as a matter of course," Mr. Hashimoto said.

Mr. Hirabayashi, a senior advisor on external affairs to the prime minister's office, declined to say how many Japanese had been taken into custody.

The Lebanese authorities have issued a number of con-

flicting statements about the case including denials they were holding any suspected Japanese Red Army members.

The issue has been mired in confusion since Mr. Hashimoto said in Tokyo on Feb. 18 that Lebanese officials had told him they had arrested six Japanese suspected members of the group in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

Most Lebanese officials have since been tight-lipped or have made contradictory statements on whether any suspected members of the group are being held.

Asked whether the confusion had negatively affected ties between Japan and Lebanon, Mr. Hirabayashi said: "No, to the contrary, I am very optimistic."

Japan and Lebanon do not have an extradition agreement but Mr. Hirabayashi said they would study the extradition issue if it was confirmed that the suspects were Japanese members of the Red Army.

"The prime minister of Lebanon and myself agreed to handle this issue in accordance with the relevant laws of both our countries and the international law," he said.

However, an official source in Beirut told Reuters Lebanon was most unlikely to hand over any of the suspects.

"The issue is now in the freezer. It is not probable that Lebanon will hand over any suspects. They will be prosecuted in Lebanon for crimes committed in the country," the source said.

Judicial sources in Beirut said on Friday Lebanese authorities had started interrogating nine or 10 detainees who were mostly Asians and included three Japanese.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has indicated that Beirut wants to maintain good relations with Tokyo, which pledged at a friends of Lebanon donors conference in Washington last December to help its postwar reconstruction.

Mr. Hariri said a large number of Japanese experts were due to come to Beirut to study projects to which Tokyo could contribute and Mr. Hirabayashi indicated that Japan was still on course to help Lebanon.

"We have had very fruitful discussions on how to promote our bilateral relations in terms of the economic and political contexts," Mr. Hirabayashi said.

Sudan denies it received 'Iraqi arms stockpiled in Yemen'

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan on Monday denied reports by opposition forces that it received weapons from Iraq to fend off an offensive on its eastern border.

"This information is erroneous and hollow and is part of a media misinformation (campaign) by the opposition to mislead world opinion," government spokesman Tayeb Ibrahim Mohammad Khair told the official press.

A member of the military command of the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Saturday charged that the Islamic-led government in Khartoum had

received Iraqi weapons which had been stockpiled in Yemen.

"The weapons, including 600 cannons or anti-tank rockets, were transported Feb. 20 from the Temeni port of Al Mokalla to port Sudan aboard the Sudanese boat Al Obayed," General Ahmad Fathi Ali said from Asmara.

Yemen also denied that any Iraqi weapons were stockpiled on its territory.

"This and previous allegations of Iranian and Qatari arms shipments to Sudan could be believed only by their authors the opposition leaders who carry out foreign

plots for disintegration of Sudan," Brigadier Khair said.

The NDA launched an offensive on Sudan's eastern border in January and has occupied some villages in the Blue Nile state. Sudan has accused neighbouring Eritrea and Ethiopia of giving support to the opposition forces.

Iran's ambassador here, Mehdi Merowe, voiced support meanwhile for the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan.

During a meeting with Sudan State Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail, the Iranian diplomat also spoke of efforts by Tehran to nor-

malise relations between Sudan and Uganda.

In September Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani offered to mediate a resumption of ties, broken since 1995, between the two countries.

In another development, Abdul Aziz Shiddo, deputy speaker of the Sudanese parliament, denounced U.N. agencies and other organisations for failing to take action to curb alleged human rights abuses by Ethiopian troops in the Sudanese border towns of Kurmuk and Qeissan.

Mr. Shiddo said the government has documented human

Christian group wants to bring 50,000 Ukrainian Jews to Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A group of Christian fundamentalists announced Monday that it is funding a plan to bring 50,000 Ukrainian Jews to Israel as a 50th "birthday present" for the Jewish state.

"We're going to settle 50,000 Jews from Ukraine in Israel as a gift to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Jewish state in May 1948," said Lea Delange, a spokeswoman for the group, Christians for Israel.

Ms. Delange said the Netherlands and British branches of the pro-Zionist Christian movement raised \$6 million to finance the airlift of Ukrainian Jews and that some immigrants from the former Soviet Republic have already arrived in Israel thanks to the

project. She said the action was organised in coordination with the Jewish agency, which is responsible for all matters involved with absorbing Jews into Israel.

But an agency spokesman, Eldad Hadar, said he was unaware of any such mass immigration plan from Ukraine.

Christians for Israel is an international group which believes that the Jewish people must end their exile from the Holy Land to set the stage for the return of Jesus Christ.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, hundreds of thousands of Jews immigrated from the area to Israel. In 1996, 23,388 Jews from Ukraine settled in Israel, according to government figures.

Israeli journalists protest Netanyahu attacks on press

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli journalists protested Monday against accusations by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the press was allying with his left-wing opposition.

"These attacks create a dangerous climate for liberty of the press and could have serious repercussions," the Israeli Press Association said in a statement received by AFP.

At a leadership meeting of his ruling right-wing Likud Party on Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu slammed the media "for making false accusations" in a scandal which has put members of his government under threat of indictment.

During Mr. Netanyahu's comments, Likud members cheered and then turned on journalists from Israel Television and began shouting at and pushing them.

Israeli public television first broke a report, now being investigated by police, of influence peddling within Mr. Netanyahu's government over the aborted nomination of a Likud Party loyalist to the post of attorney general.

The press has reported that police investigations focus on Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, Netanyahu chief-of-staff Avigdor Lieberman and coalition deputy Arieh Deri, head of the religious party Shas.

The three are suspected of having conspired over the nomination of Roni Bar-On as part of a deal which would have led to a plea bargain for Mr. Deri in his trial on bribery charges.

Mr. Bar-On was forced to drop the post of attorney-general only days after his appointment by Mr. Netanyahu after widespread protests over his lack of judicial experience and ties to the government.

During Sunday night's Likud rally, Mr. Netanyahu went out of his way to reaffirm his support for both Mr. Hanegbi and Mr. Lieberman despite reports both could face indictment.

Erekat accuses Israel of condoning violence against Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A senior Palestinian official accused Israel on Monday of promoting violence against Arabs by failing to punish Israeli soldiers who shoot Palestinians.

"The leniency of this government is seen as encouraging violence against Palestinians," said Saeb Erekat, local affairs minister in the self-rule government of Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Erekat, who is also a chief peace negotiator with Israel, told AFP he had sent protest letters to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government over two incidents in which soldiers who shot Palestinians were not being charged.

In the first case, an Israeli court decided last week to drop charges against an Israeli soldier who opened fire in a crowded market in the West Bank city of Hebron on Jan. 1, wounding six people.

The court ruled that the soldier, Noam Friedman, suffered from schizophrenia and ordered him sent to a psychiatric hospital.

"Why did they accept Friedman in the army if he has psychological problems? They should charge this soldier," Mr. Erekat complained.

In the second case, charges have not yet been brought against Israeli soldiers who last week killed a Palestinian man in the West Bank village of Hizme.

The man was shot dead and three other Palestinians were injured when violence erupted after undercover Israeli soldiers entered Hizme and began interrogating a 21-year-old resident of the village.

The dead man was the suspect's father-in-law. Friedman opened fire with a military assault rifle in Hebron's main open-air market in a bid to scuttle Israeli plans to withdraw from most of the city.

The soldier said he regretted "not killing any Arabs" and told psychiatrists his mission was "God given."

Friedman had already been hospitalised two years ago for mental problems and an investigation has been opened into how he was allowed into the Israeli military.

Aziz says Ekeus changes colours to suit occasion

BAGHDAD (AP) — Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz lashed out Monday at the chief U.N. weapons inspector, Rolf Ekeus, saying he changed his statements to suit the occasion.

Mr. Aziz spoke to the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) before leaving on a trip to Moscow. It is a follow-up visit to a trip last November, when Mr. Aziz appealed for Russian help in getting U.N. sanctions lifted.

Iraq has long accused Mr. Ekeus, a Swedish diplomat, of being in league with the United States in trying to keep punishing U.N. sanctions in place.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions banning air travel and the sale of oil on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The United Nations last year approved limited oil sales to allow Iraq to purchase needed food and medicine. But it has said it will not lift the sanctions until Mr. Ekeus' special commission certifies that Iraq has eliminated all its weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Aziz told the news agency that "he (Ekeus) gives multicolour statements." He said that in Baghdad, Mr. Ekeus speaks objectively but that "when he goes to Kuwait, he speaks in a way to satisfy the Kuwaiti regime."

He added that the same thing had occurred during Mr. Ekeus' recent trips to Moscow and Britain.

Mr. Aziz said he had talked with Mr. Ekeus several times about his vary-

ing statements but said "he ... denies saying so and so and says the press misquotes him."

The Iraqi official concluded, however, that it appeared Mr. Ekeus was "intentionally casting doubts on Iraq's position."

Mr. Ekeus has repeatedly accused Iraq of misleading his inspectors on Iraq's weapons programme.

On a trip to Baghdad last month, Mr. Ekeus won Iraqi approval to remove missile parts for examination in the United States. Iraq had been blocking the move, saying it wanted the missiles checked inside Iraq or in Russia.

In addition to studying the long-range missiles, Mr. Ekeus' team is still delving into Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Mr. Aziz said that Iraq had increasing support inside the Security Council to lift the sanctions. Iraq has accused the United States and its main ally, Britain, of keeping them in place to punish Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

"Those countries which try to keep the sanctions, like America, find themselves more and more in isolation," he said.

Aziz arrives in Amman

Mr. Aziz arrived in Amman Monday en route to Moscow.

Officials said the Iraqi deputy prime minister was not scheduled to hold talks with any Jordanian official during his overnight stay in Amman.



U.S. denies theft of aid for Russia

MOSCOW (AFP) — The U.S. embassy in Moscow Monday denied reports that \$2.5 million in U.S. government aid to Russia had been stolen at London's Heathrow airport last week. "This story, as reported, is not credible," an embassy press release said. "USAID has no direct government-to-government cash payments in Russia. Our technical assistance programmes are funded through federal letters of credit or electronic transfers to contractors and non-governmental organisations which implement these programmes." A British paper, the Mail on Sunday, reported that a bag containing \$2.5 million in U.S. aid was stolen last Tuesday during a stopover at Heathrow. The cash vanished despite being under constant surveillance by British Airways personnel in a top security area of the airport's freight zone, the paper said. The money in large denomination notes was part of a consignment of \$10 million from the Republic Bank of New York used by the U.S. treasury to deliver money to Russia, the paper said. It was to be delivered to the Russian Tokobank.

Husband saves wife from crocodile

HARARE (AFP) — A heroic husband saved his wife from the jaws of a crocodile when he plunged into a river and fought the huge reptile with a knife, local media reported Monday. Marion Shariwa, 48, was snatched from the bank of the Shashi River and was screaming and clutching at reeds as the croc swam off with her when her husband Amon, 58, was alerted by their children. He dived into the river and caught up with the crocodile as it headed for the far bank. Holding onto his wife with one hand, Amon plunged a knife repeatedly into the soft tissue of the beast's mouth until it released her. Marion, who had been fetching water from the river, was admitted to hospital with deep wounds on both legs.

India to ban 'professional' blood donors

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India will ban blood donation by "professionals" by the end of next year in an attempt to curb the spread of AIDS, a minister said Monday. Minister of State for Health Saleem Sherwani told parliament that under an upcoming policy for blood banks "it would be ensured that professional donors are completely banned from donating blood." He said the government would also examine a suggestion to make the donation of infected blood a legal offence. Hundreds of poor people are known to regularly donate blood to the country's 1,400 blood banks in return for money. Experts say many of them may be suffering from a variety of diseases, including AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

Chef Ducasse gets mixed report

PARIS (AFP) — French chef Alain Ducasse got a mixed report card Monday from the Michelin Guide to Fine Dining, as his restaurant in Montecarlo slipped from three stars to two but his new Paris eatery won the top rating of three. The 1997 edition of the guide also awarded two stars to Pierre Gagnaire for his brand new restaurant in Paris.

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